

Understanding Karate-do

Owen Johnston &



*A Guide to Unity of
Body, Mind, and Soul*

UnderstandingKarate.com

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Johnston, Owen

Understanding Karate-do/Martial Arts Instruction, 4th Edition

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Mizuumi ryu Karate is the style that I created, and teach. The nucleus of the style is formed by Heiwado Karate (the style of Japan International Karate Center) and Boxing, with influences from grappling arts. The style is dedicated to the development of body, mind, and spirit. A general outline of the style's approach is included near the end of the book. The Mizuumi ryu page on my site will include all of the latest details and news regarding the style.

Mizuumi ryu Karate – Official Home Page

mizuumiryukarate.com

For a free one-page list of supplementary resources I highly recommend, visit this book's home page and click on the link near the top that says 'Supplementary Resources'.

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'For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.'

Disclaimer

This book is intended for people of good health and physical condition. The training methods and advice in this book may not be for everyone. Always consult your physician before starting a new exercise program. I am not a physician, and as such, nothing in this book should in any way be taken as medical advice or a substitute for medical advice. Also, this book should not be used to replace advice from your personal physician.

Physical activity always carries with it a risk of injury. When you practice the training methods in this book, always practice proper safety precaution, use proper technique, and apply common sense. The author can not assume any responsibility for any injury, illness, loss or damage that may result from following the training methods in this book.

Lastly, this book is not a replacement for formal instruction. Be sure to seek out a competent, qualified instructor who may carefully observe your progress and provide feedback. This book is intended primarily to be a supplement to, not a replacement for, formal training.

Stepping into a traditional dojo can be a confusing experience if you are visiting one for the first time. A fellow karateka (karate practitioner) has written a dojo survival guide that is aimed at 'traditional martial artists of all styles and experience levels.' View this free PDF e-book below -

<http://www.ikigaiway.com/2009/students-dojos-survival-guide/>

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Introduction

'The true purpose of budo is the search for truth. In karate, three elements are important - physical strength, spirit and heart. The end of do (the way), cannot be achieved in a few years, rather it is a lifelong search. Perhaps you could say the aim is to make us good Human Beings.'

- Ohtsuka Hironori (6/1/1892 - 1/29/1982), founder of Wado ryu karate

Karate is an exciting and rewarding holistic pursuit practiced by millions around the world. Karate-do, as a tool for self-improvement in one's own life and for the lives of others, is rivaled by few other disciplines on earth. It may be practiced nearly anywhere, anytime, and by almost anyone, especially its code of conduct. It is indeed a discipline that one may apply to one's existing beliefs. It is simply one of many methods by which one may step onto the path of becoming the best person one can possibly be, where one's ultimate teacher will be life itself. Whether you are an existing or prospective student of martial arts, there is always something new to learn. I have hopefully provided a good starting point, as this guide details karate history, various techniques, combat principles, and philosophy.

However, no book can replace formal, technical instruction; as such, this book is primarily designed as a companion guide for the existing or prospective student of Karate-do. Also, as this book is intended to be a concise student guide, I realize that the histories and lineage provided are far from being complete or comprehensive. However, I do hope that they are passable as basic, concise sources. For more comprehensive information about the wide world of karate and more, check out my Sources and Recommended Viewing.

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A Brief History of Karate

Karate-do, in all its various forms, finds its origins in one place - the Ryukyu islands off the coast of Japan. What we know as one of the most widely practiced systems of self defense and discipline in the world is the result of centuries of development. While Karate-do was introduced as a code of ethics to a peacetime America only a few decades ago, it began through the need of Ryukyu natives for better methods of fighting.

There are a few theories about the origins of the fighting arts that later became collectively known as Karate-do. However, it is certain that many notable Chinese kung fu practitioners settled in Okinawa, the capital of the Ryukyu kingdom.

The origins of the Chinese arts themselves are also shrouded in the mists of time. A widely accepted theory is that Bodhidharma, the founder of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism created what would later evolve into Shaolin kung-fu. The original exercises were used to strengthen his monks' bodies, minds, and spirits, to help them better fulfill their duties. This level of personal cultivation carried across to many Chinese martial arts. By way of transmission to other countries, this carried across to other martial arts, Karate-do being one of them.

In the year 1429, a weapons ban was passed by King Shohashi. This led to the rapid development of native unarmed fighting arts. These arts were primarily influenced by various forms of Chinese kung fu, which Okinawans began learning in the 14th century.

Okinawans learned forms of Shaolin kung fu from Shaolin masters who fled China as a result of the oppressive Qing dynasty. Okinawans also learned various forms of kung fu from Chinese merchants, Chinese officials on diplomatic missions, and young members of wealthy Okinawan families who went to China to learn 'Quan Fa' / kung fu to further their education and martial arts studies. The general name given to the fighting arts learned and further refined by the Okinawan martial artists was tode-jutsu (alternately spelled tou-di), the Okinawan name given to Chinese martial arts.

In February 1609, invasion of Okinawa by the Satsuma clan (of Kyushu, Japan) triggered another period of rapid development of native Okinawan fighting arts. Satsuma control lasted until 1879, when the King of Ryukyu finally abdicated and the country became part of Japan.

During this period, *kobudo* (often translated 'classical fighting method'; commonly used to represent Okinawan weapon fighting) evolved. Farm implements were used as weapons, as traditional weapons were not allowed. However, some of the native Ryukyu warrior class traveled up to the Satsuma clan in the later part of the 19th century and learned their samurai fighting art Jigen-ryu kenjutsu. It was not long after this that Sokon

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Matsumura, 'Toudi' Sakugawa, and Tsuken Koura, among the many who had made the trip, introduced their contributions to kobudo.

Ultimately, three major strains were developed from Ryukyu kenpo karate-jutsu (as tode-jutsu eventually came to be called). These strains were named Shuri-te, Naha-te, and Tomari-te, for the regions in which they were developed. All three regions are based in the southern part of Okinawa. The differences of the three styles may be traced back to the socio-economic status of those who practiced them. The lowest rung on the ladder was the worker class studying Tomari-Te. The middle section was the merchant class studying Naha-Te. The upper class noblemen were taking up practice of Shuri-te in and around the capital.

Matsumura is commonly considered the great grandfather of the karate movement in and around Shuri. He learned native Okinawan fighting from Sakugawa (who in turn learned from Kusankun and other masters). He later studied in Fujian and Satsuma. He learned Shaolin Boxing (Shorin-ryu) under the tutelage of master Iwah. As a result of the efforts of Matsumura, the fighting arts that surfaced around the noble / castle district of Shuri came to be known as Shuri-te (Shuri hand).

The Chinese master Ason taught Zhao Ling Liu (Shorei-ryu) to Sakiyama, Gushi, Nagahama, and Tomoyori of Naha. This led to the development of Naha-te. Naha, a coastal city, was a large trade center at the time. Xie Zhongxiang (nicknamed Ryuru Ko) of Fuzhou founded Whooping Crane kung fu (hakutsuru) and taught it to a number of notable karate masters in the Fuzhou province. Wai Xinxian, it is said, was a Qing dynasty officer, and taught Xingyi kung fu as well as Monk Fist Boxing. It is also said he assisted Master Iwah's instruction in Fuzhou province.

Two separate, modern styles developed from Naha-te: Goju-Ryu and Uechi-Ryu. Goju-ryu stresses deep breathing methods (ibuki). Its kata, including Sanchin, tend to utilize dynamic tension for power training. Uechi-ryu uses a number of kata that Kanei Uechi (1877-1948) learned while in China, as well as several Goju-ryu kata. Uechi-ryu's Sanchin is done with open hands, and doesn't use the deep breathing emphasized by Goju ryu.

Naha-te's Chinese lineage can be seen through the influence of the forms and methods of Crane and other styles. Dragon Boxing includes the forms Seisan, Peichurrin (also known as Suparimpei), Saam Chien, and Eighteen Scholar Fists. Tiger Boxing also includes Saam Chien and Peichurrin, as well as Sanseiru and others. Arhat Boxing (Monk Fist) has Saam Chien, Seisan, Jitte, Seipai, Useishi, Peichurrin, and other forms.

While Karate was primarily organized in Shuri and Naha, Tomari originally had little direct influence. This is because, at that time, Tomari was inhabited by a simple people; it was a working class city of fishermen. Tomari had its share of notable masters, however, with

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Kosaku Matsumora (1829-1898), Kokan Oyadomari (1827-1905) and Gikei Yamazato (1835-1905) the most notable. They studied under Annan, as well as Ason, a Chinese sergeant.

Tomari was located near Shuri, and its fighting arts developed partly under its influence. Some of the Chinese masters who taught Tomari villagers, however, did not reach Shuri. Some of these teachings did later influence Shuri-te, as exchanges eventually took place. Many of the kata became part of both Shuri-te and Tomari-te. Some of the kata unique to Tomari-te, however, are Wansu, Rohai, and Wankan. It is believed that Chotoku Kyan (1870-1945) brought the kata Ananku from Taiwan in 1895. It is said there are other kata that have been lost over time.

It is also said that a pirate or sailor (named Chinto, or Annan, depending on the source), was a castaway from a shipwreck on the coast. He took refuge in the graveyard of the mountains of Tomari, and later lived in a cave. Reportedly, Sokon Matsumura formulated the kata Chinto (a.k.a. Gankaku) from the sailor's White Crane Kung Fu teachings. Chinto kata, of which there are more than half a dozen versions, was adopted into shuri-te. The Tomari-te chinto kata has a Chinese flair, in contrast with the simpler looking shuri-te version. A one legged stance occurs many times, bearing the image of a crane poised to strike its prey. The flying kicks of this kata differentiates it from others.

Matsumora and Oyadomari apprenticed under local masters Kishin Teruya (1804-1864) and Giko Uku (1800-1850). They learned from Teruya the kata Passai, Rohai, and Wanshu, and from Uku, the kata Naifanchi. Matsumora was also versed in the jo-jutsu (short staff technique) of Jigen ryu. It is often said in Okinawan sources that Matsumora is Annan's successor. Yamazato followed Matsumora and Oyadomari, who were close friends. Both masters encouraged their students to exchange techniques and kata, furthering the development of Tomari-te. Tomari-te became a light form of fighting, with plenty of feints.

The kata Seishan is named after a well known Chinese martial artist who lived in or near Shuri circa 1700. He was associated with Takahara Perchin, a map-maker who was the first to teach Tode Sakugawa. The kata is said to be the oldest still in use, and translates to '13' or '30'. The naha-te Seisan has a Chinese flair. The movements are repeated in sets of three, and has pivots and turning of the head. Hangetsu, the Japanese name for Seisan, translates to half-moon. This is taken from the stances and footwork, as well as the hand movements, which use circular paths. As with many other forms, the kata's movements differ slightly between styles.

Throughout this period, tode-jutsu was taught primarily for health, philosophy and self defense. In this way, the Chinese tradition was continued. Tou-di, the karate of old, was not meant for the competition seen in modern karate. In fact, there were no public classes, as

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practicing fighting was forbidden as a way to promote public order. The to-de masters chose their students with caution because they were liable for problems that could arise (and frequently did) from their students' actions. Tode-jutsu had also become a part of the imperial guards' training. As a result of Okinawa's annexation to Japan, however, there was a huge unemployment boom, and poverty spread heavily. Because of this, a number of chikundun peichin (those who upheld public order in the Ryukyu kingdom) started teaching tode-jutsu for money.

In the Satsuma occupation's later years, Japan began major changes as a result of the Meiji restoration. Cultural reforms led to the abolition of the feudal system, the abasement of the samurai class, and development of democracy. However, democracy was never fully implemented, nor were all the ideas of the samurai code and the feudal system totally abandoned. Japan did not want to totally lose its strong identity to (primarily Western) foreign influences. Part of this identity was the bugei (martial arts), which assisted in the shaping of modern Japan.

The budo (martial ways), as they came to be called, were more than simply a cultural recreation. The ruling elite used the spread of budo to further instill moral virtues, the values of bushido (way of the warrior), and 'Japaneseness' in the Japanese public. In this Pre-World War II age full of increasing militarism, Japan needed strong, able men who were willing to fight to the death. Japan also hoped that young men of good health and mind would be more productive citizens.

As a result, many budo were introduced to the school system. Some of these classical budo included Aikido (The Way of Spiritual Harmony), Jiu Jitsu (unarmed self defense art often focused on grappling), and Kendo (Way of the Sword), derived from the samurai fighting traditions. Also, Judo ('Gentle Art') was developed from jiu jitsu in the later part of the 19th century.

Itosu Anko led a group of Okinawan karate-jutsu experts in a campaign to introduce the art to the Okinawan school system as a form of exercise. Many of the dangerous applications were not practiced in the school system, transforming karate from a hidden art of self defense into a unique recreation.

Karate was introduced in this form to the Japanese mainland in 1917. The Japanese martial arts association ('Dai Nippon Butokukai') was interested enough in karate to invite the art's best practitioner. Their intent was to compare karate-jutsu to Japanese jiu jitsu in matches of skill.

Gichin Funakoshi was an Okinawan native who taught at the school 'Shoto Gakko', which prepared Okinawans for Japanese civil service. His life's passion, however, was karate.

Because of the respect he commanded from Japanese gentlemen, and his skill in karate, he was selected to represent Okinawa's martial art.

He defeated every opponent he faced at the demonstration, and won great respect. Because of this and his love of Japanese culture, he stayed on the mainland to further propagate karate. As a result of the first and further exhibitions, he gained many followers and ultimately began teaching out of a Kendo dojo.

At first, there were cultural barriers and traditions that slowed the progress of karate across the mainland. As a result of Funakoshi's excellence in teaching, however, he broke through the prejudices against karate. Eventually, he was able to open his own dojo, which was the first formalized karate dojo. Also during this time, karate as a whole came to be formalized and 'Japanized' (although divisions among separate karate styles have not, to this day, been resolved - primarily due to pride and organizational politics).

Such formalization included acceptance of the kyu/dan (class/grade) system as devised by Jigoro Kano (founder of judo). Also, it became important that all teachers were qualified and knowledgeable. Finally, it was necessary to institute a standard curriculum, uniform, and competitive format.

Nationalism and anti-Chinese sentiment made the karate-jutsu movement consider a more appropriate ideogram to represent their art. The original 'kara' ideogram of karate meant China, as did the 'tou' of toudi (Chinese hand, and a reference to the Tang dynasty). The replacement ideogram means 'empty', and takes on not just a physical but a spiritual meaning. 'Kara' may represent the 'void', and freedom from worldly desire.

Also changed was the suffix for karate. Instead of jutsu (art/science), do (way/path/totality, pronounced 'dao' in Mandarin) came to be used. In this sense, as a result of the efforts of such masters as Itosu, karate-do joined kendo, jiu jitsu, aikido, and judo as a modern budo, in which not only combat is practiced, but also a cultural discipline for the pursuit of harmony.

A Brief History of Wado Ryu

Hironori Ohtsuka founded Wado-Ryu, the 1st Japanese form of Karate in 1938. It was the result of many years of training in various forms of Japanese Jiu Jitsu and Okinawan Karate, as well as Aikido, developed into a single fluid, powerful, yet peaceful martial art. Wado-Ryu Karate is the Way of Peace and Harmony, and is practiced as a way of life by millions of people worldwide.

For such a relatively new and widely practiced martial art, details of its origin are either scarce or hotly debated. There is also plenty of speculation and rumor. I will give as factual an outline of the history as I am able. Also, I apologize beforehand if it seems that any part of this history is vague, which is a result of the lack of facts pertaining to that particular section. For a more comprehensive study of Karate, Wado-Ryu, and Ohtsuka-sensei, please refer to the Acknowledgments at the end of the book.

Ohtsuka began his martial arts training very young. His great uncle Chojiro Ebashi began teaching him Jiu Jitsu (alternately spelled jujutsu and jujitsu), a grappling oriented art beginning at the age of 3 or 4. He was later enrolled around age 5 or 6 in shindo yoshin-ryu jujutsu ('Sacred Willow Style' jujutsu) under Shinzaburo Nakayama-sensei. This form of Jiu Jitsu was founded by Katsunosuke Matsuoka, a student of Yoshin-ryu jujutsu ('Willow Style'), in the early to mid 1800s. Shindo Yoshin-ryu emphasizes grace and natural movement.

This study of natural flowing movement later played a major role in the development of Wado principles, along with Ohtsuka's training later in life under Morihei Ueshiba O'Sensei, founder of Aikido. The use of the opponent's momentum are as important in defeating him or her as your own movements. Also, Jiu Jitsu's orientation towards rugged practicality influenced Ohtsuka's modifications to the Karate techniques he would later learn.

The Jiu Jitsu community of that time generally retained many of the Samurai traditions and fighting arts from which Jiu Jitsu itself was derived. Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jiu Jitsu, for example, contained Kenjutsu influence and a heavier emphasis on striking than many other Jiu Jitsu forms. The Kenjutsu side was a definite influence on the body shifting and hand controlling techniques Ohtsuka later included in Wado-Ryu.

Ohtsuka continued his study of Jiu Jitsu for many years. During his period at Waseda University (from 1910-1917, where he earned his Associate's Degree in Economics) he experimented with various Jiu Jitsu styles to find their best qualities. Even this early on, Ohtsuka began evolving his techniques and principles.

According to many, on June 1st 1920 Ohtsuka was promoted to 4th Grandmaster of Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jiu Jitsu. This has been much debated, however. The 3rd grandmaster of Shindo Yoshin Ryu, Tatsuo Matsuoka (grandson of the art's founder), did not pass away until 1989, 7 years after Ohtsuka's death.

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Also, Ohtsuka's instructor, Nakayama, had previously branched off from the founder to begin his own style and lineage of Shindo Yoshin-ryu. It is also heavily debated as to how much or little of the actual shindo yoshin-ryu jujutsu curriculum was later adopted into Wado ryu. Also, Ohtsuka had, at some time during the early 1920s, been awarded a 'menkyo kaiden' certificate. This certification essentially meant he had gained full proficiency in the system. At the very least, Wado was heavily influenced by the shindo yoshin-ryu principles, and some of its waza (techniques).

Nonetheless, Ohtsuka's path as a budoka was set by this point, and would soon take its first fateful turn. He would soon meet the father of modern karate, Gichin Funakoshi. In the fall of 1922, Ohtsuka was giving thought to his future. Although his job at the bank appeared secure, he was not satisfied. He wanted to devote his life to his true passion, the martial arts.

This interest was heightened even more when Ohtsuka found out that an Okinawan school teacher, Gichin Funakoshi, was invited by Crown Prince Hirohito to perform karate before the Emperor of Japan at a public hall in Tokyo. Ohtsuka attended the demonstration, and as a result became one of Funakoshi's 35 original Japanese students.

Because of the popularity gained by the demonstration, Funakoshi stayed in Japan. Ohtsuka was at Funakoshi's dojo nearly every night, absorbing the art. By 1924, he became chief assistant instructor. On April 24th, Ohtsuka was named among the first seven black belts in modern karate.

Funakoshi came to rely heavily on Ohtsuka. At 32, Ohtsuka's realized his dream of being a full time martial artist. However, he found Funakoshi's karate (later named Shotokan) lacking. He felt there was little sense behind the philosophies, the kata seemed to have no practical application, and the movements were too confined. Also, Funakoshi did not allow free sparring, leaving no way to truly test his karate. Therefore, while still assisting Funakoshi, Ohtsuka trained with other notable masters. These included Kenwa Mabuni, founder of Shito-Ryu Karate, as well as Choki Motobu, famous for his excellent technical and fighting abilities, and Morihei Ueshiba, founder of Aikido.

Ueshiba O'Sensei helped Ohtsuka find the missing link, and officially begin the creation of Wado. Like Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jiu Jitsu, Aikido is a direct descendant of Aikijujutsu (a part of Samurai combative). The greatness of Aikido is in its reliance on natural movements, focusing on breathing, relaxation, and 'ki' (life force; breath; spirit). Whereas most karate tended to generate tension in performing techniques, Aikido was the opposite. Instead of meeting force of force, it blended with and redirected the opposing force or ki.

It was upon learning Aikido that Ohtsuka-sensei began to form a new budo, a Way of Harmony. He would eventually blend the basics of Funakoshi's karate, the practicality of

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Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jiu Jitsu, and the spirituality of Aikido, as well as the natural, evasive movements of the latter two. Much like the Jiu Jitsu influence on Ohtsuka-meijin's budo, Aikido had more influence on the principles from which techniques are derived, rather than the specific techniques themselves. Also, it would appear that Shito ryu Karate and Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jiu Jitsu had a much heavier influence on Wado than Aikido.

Ohtsuka gradually incorporated knowledge from Jiu Jitsu, Aikido, and the other karate sensei he trained with, into the classes Funakoshi-sensei had put him in charge of. This included free fighting, and weaving his newfound principles into the kata. While many students agreed with the changes being made, Funakoshi-sensei viewed them as contrary to his teachings. Due to their disagreements, it was in 1930 that Ohtsuka-sensei and Funakoshi-sensei finally parted ways.

Over the 4 years that followed, with help from students who also left Funakoshi's instruction, Ohtsuka continued his own teaching. Constantly developing his new budo, he focused on deriving practical defense from formal art. A major breakthrough was the idea of Kihon Kumite Kata, which became his greatest contribution to martial arts. In blending Jiu Jitsu, Aikido, and Karate, he created not only 36 new kata, but a new budo.

Ohtsuka-sensei created the All Japan Karate-do Research Organization (*Dai Nippon Karatedo Shinko Kai*) in 1934, after encouragement from many of his students. Also, his son Jiro (later known as Hironori Ohtsuka II), who would later become Ohtsuka's heir, was born that same year.

Four years later, the All Japan Classical Martial Arts Festival (*Dai Nippon Kobudo Tai Kai*) invited Ohtsuka-sensei to demonstrate his controversial new style. He was asked to name the style prior to the demonstration, and he registered it as Shin Shu Wado Ryu Karate-jujutsu - New Style Way of Harmony School. The year after, when Dai Nippon Butokukai requested all Japanese martial arts and their chief instructors register their names, Ohtsuka-sensei gave the name Wado-Ryu - Way of Peace and Harmony.

Ohtsuka-sensei continued teaching, and Wado-Ryu eventually became one of the most highly regarded Japanese martial arts. The 1st All Japan Wado-Ryu Karate championships were held in 1955. In 1963, Mr. Arakawa, Mr. Takashima, and Mr. Tatsao Suzuki left Japan to help spread Wado-Ryu Karate to Europe and America. Emperor Hirohito in 1966 awarded Ohtsuka-sensei with The Grand Order of the Rising Sun (*Kyuokujitsusho*). In 1972, the president of International Martial Arts Federation (*Kokusai Budo Renmei*) awarded Ohtsuka the title of 'meijin' (master), the first time a karateka had been given such an honor in Japan. Even now, many years after his death in 1982, people all over the world are still being affected in a positive way by Ohtsuka's Wado-Ryu Karate-do, which is his ultimate honor.

Lineage

Any further worthwhile information is accepted and appreciated.

Sokon Matsumura

Student of Kong Su Kung/Kushanku and Sakugawa

Matsumura taught Okinawan Shuri-te which later became known as Shorin-Ryu. This form was a combination of Sakugawa's tode, and Kong Su Kung's Chinese Boxing.

Yasutsune Itosu

Student of Sokon Matsumura

Itosu-sensei continued Shorin-Ryu as it was originally taught by Matsumura-sensei.

Kanryo Higaonna

He practiced and taught the Naha-te style which became known as Shorei-Ryu (influenced directly by Zhao Long Liu, a Chinese martial art). After his death, Shorei-ryu was continued by Chojun Miyagi, who later formulated it into Goju-Ryu.

Kosanku Matsumora

He practiced and taught Tomari-te.

Other practitioners and styles at/around the time:

Hohan Soka, founder of Matsumuro Seito

Chotoku Kyan, founder of Shobayashi-Ryu

Chosin Chibana, founder of Kobayashi-Ryu

Shosin Nagamine, founder of Matsubayashi-Ryu

Joel Nakazato, founder of Shorinji-Ryu

Kanbun Uechi, founder of Uechi-Ryu

Motubi-Ryu, a family style

Isshin-Ryu, founded by Tatsuo Shimabuku.

Toon-Ryu, founded by Juhatsu Kiyoda.

Shito-Ryu, founded by Kenwa Mabuni.

Okinawan Kempo, a combination of Shuri-te, Naha-te, and Tomari-te, founded by Shigeru Nalamura.

Gichin Funakoshi

Student of Yasutsune Itosu and Sokon Matsumura

The father of modern karate-do, Funakoshi-sensei founded Shotokan Karate-do in the 1920's after popularizing his martial art in Japan. He originally studied under not only Matsumura and Itosu-sensei but a number of other masters, whom Funakoshi talks about in

Lineage continued

detail in his Karate-do: My Way of Life.

Choki Motobu

Student of Soken Matsumura and Anko Itosu of Shuri, Kosaku Matsumora of Tomari, and possibly Tokumine

His teaching methods primarily consisted of Naihanchi kata for kihon (basics), and kumite. He stressed up-close fighting.

Hironori Ohtsuka

Student of Gichin Funakoshi

Founder of Wado-Ryu Karate-do, Ohtsuka-sensei developed the style as a blend of the basics and kata of Shotokan Karate, the rugged practicality and natural movements of Shindo Yoshin-ryu Jiu Jitsu, and the fluidity and peacefulness of Aikido. The Wado-Ryu symbol represents peace encompassing strength.

In the months leading to his retirement, he decided that his son was to succeed him as grandmaster of Wado-Ryu. However, some of the higher level Wado-Ryu Karateka were not in favor of this decision. Negotiations took place, but no agreement could be reached as to the next grandmaster. As a result, some of the karateka split off to form their own associations.

Hironori Ohtsuka II (Ohtsuka Jiro)

Son & Student of Hironori Ohtsuka

Months before his father's death, he and a group split from Japan Karate Federation-Wadokai. His split is named Wadoryu Renmei. It is regarded as a private group. In 1989 a new split occurred. Suzuki Tatsuo, resident in London, founded International Wadoryu Federation.

Hironori Ohtsuka III

Grandson of Hironori Ohtsuka

Tatsao Suzuki

Senior Student of Hironori Ohtsuka

Founder of International Wadoryu Federation

Suzuki sensei was one of the primary influences in spreading Wado throughout Europe. As a result, Wado is currently the most widely practiced form of karate in Britain.

Lineage continued**Lineage of Heiwado:****Kiyohisa Hirano-soke**

Student of Hironori Ohtsuka

Founder of Japan International Karate Center

Hirano-soke founded Heiwa-do, his interpretation of Wado-Ryu Karate-do. It also blends in ideas from Shotokan, Shito-Ryu, and Goju-Ryu, as well as Aikido, Iaido, and Judo. The basic strategy and philosophies are classical Wado-Ryu.

Shotokan's scientific approach to body physics helps students grasp instruction more easily. Shito's efficiency & superior stances are also adopted. Also integrated into the movements are Goju-Ryu's dynamic breathing methods.

The name Heiwa-do uses the first kanji (Japanese set of Chinese loanwords) of Hirano (Hira, or Hei) & the 1st character from Wado (Wa). The do in Heiwa-do translates to The Way. Heiwa-do's name was created out of respect for its origins in Wado-Ryu. Heiwa also happens to be the Japanese word for peace; therefore Heiwa-do literally means The Way of Peace.

Shihan Ronald Woodard

Student of Kiyohisa Hirano-soke & current shihan of JIKC

Shihan Woodard is the 1st JIKC instructor in continental US.

Sensei Dale Coker

Student of Shihan Ronald Woodard

Founder of Nippon Kokusai Karate Center

Founder of Japan Karate Institute

Sensei Curtis Boyd

Student of Sensei Dale Coker

Sensei Kevin Marshall

Student of Sensei Dale Coker

Karate Principles for Self Defense

Included in this chapter is a list of generalized principles of the self-defense side of Karate, meant to be applied to every day life.

The next two chapters after this detail technique, and kata, respectively. A comprehensive listing of all techniques and variations as practiced in every family style and branch of karate, as well as the differences in kata between branches, is beyond the focus of this book. Also, no book, no matter how technical the explanations and pictures, can possibly replace formal instruction. Therefore, this book is intended as a general guide that I hope will serve you alongside your daily training.

The general learning curve intended is for body mechanics, mental discipline, and ethical precepts to be practiced in the first phases of training. After such training, application of principles, mental focus, and personal development may be assisted.

Wa no Michi – the Way of Peace

We should seek unity, harmony, and peace within ourselves and the world around us.

Karate-do - The Way of the Empty Hand

Do not look to one way of doing things or one technique. Instead, internalize all you have learned, to become like water, and take the path of least resistance. Do not meet force with force, but avoid or stop attacks using body shifting, footwork, stop hits, and deflection. Blend naturally with opposing energy.

Zanshin

'Remaining mind' / Awareness.

Haragei

Breathing art. Breathe, relax, and settle your body, naturally.

Mushin

'Mind-without-thinking'. Empty your mind and be fully aware of all angles. Do not concentrate on one technique, but let your principles guide you according to the situation.

Kiai

'Life force harmony' / Spirit Focus. Exert your spirit in a powerful yet natural way. Be flexible, intimidating, and untouchable.

Tai Sabaki

Body management/body shifting/'optimum utilization'. These movements are performed with economy of motion.

Karate Principles for Self Defense continued

The 3 body shifting methods - San mi Ittai

Ten-i - Move away from the attack.

Ten-tai - Turn and realign the body to dodge the attack or reduce the area on your body that is vulnerable to attack.

Ten-gi - Perform techniques while the attack passes through. Consider using his/her momentum to your advantage.

Timings for counter attack

Consider uses for the body shifting methods.

Go no Sen - Defensive attack. Counter once the attack is completed, but before the opponent is able to attack again.

Sen - Simultaneously attack with the attacker. You will complete your counter first, and/or displace the attacker's movement.

Sensen no Sen - Preempt the attack with your own, by perceiving your opponent's intent. This will catch him/her off guard, breaking his/her mental balance.

Defensive movements

Heavily influenced by Shindo Yoshin-ryu jujutsu, these movements are used to control the opponent's energy. These movements apply maa-i and body shifting. Consider uses of the timings for counter attack.

Nagasu - Flowing / Fluidity. Move evasively off the line of attack but closely enough that the attacker's force can be used to add to your own.

Irimi – Blending in with / entering the opponent's attack.

Inasu - Move under, inside, or around the attack.

Noru - Control the opponent's movement.

Musubi

'Connection'. This deals with finding the opponent's center of gravity. Use as little energy and strength as possible when making this 'connection'. Focusing on skill in application rather than force guarantees proper use of principle, and reduce your opponent's chances of using strength to overpower you. Relax and develop sensitivity! Once you find this, you will find the same principles in all 'waza' / techniques. Remember to push with the hands and pull with the feet.

Karate Principles for Self Defense continued

Ki Ken Tai no Ichi

'Mind and Body as One'. Coordination of mind and body in movement. Thought and action must become one.

Hei Jo Shin

'Calm mind and body'. When the opponent feints or draws a weapon, you should not flinch. Instead, fight reflexively with a focused mind.

Maai

The state of mind and spirit of the combatants, and the distance between them. Keep enough space to attack and defend. At a high level, you control the spirit and energy of a conflict. Draw a reaction from the opponent that will give you a tactical advantage. Draw a reaction from the opponent that will give you a tactical advantage. Practice the above principles, and continuously study specific tactics, to understand and apply maai.

Below is a link to the article that was my major reference for many of the principles listed in this article. I applied my own understanding of and experience with these principles in writing this article. The reference page is below -

<http://www.sannoya.com/principles.htm>

Basic Techniques and Drills

This is not a comprehensive list of techniques and drills, but those that I personally teach. Notes and Japanese terms also included.

Basic Directions/Positions

High - Jodan / Middle - Chudan / Low – Gedan

Left - Hidari / Right – Migi

Centerline - Seichusen, Pattern line – Embusen

Karate Techniques (Basic Strikes, Kicks, Blocks, and Stances)

Strikes:

Knife hand – Shuto uchi

Ridge hand – Haito

Elbow strike - Empi uchi

Hammer fist – Tettsui uchi

Back fist - Ura ken

Spear hand thrust - Nukite

One knuckle punch - Ippon ken

Palm strike - Teisho uchi

Reverse Punch - Gyakuzuki

Kicks:

Front snap kick - Mae geri

Roundhouse kick - Mawashi geri

Side thrust kick - Yoku geri kekomi

Side snap kick - Yoko geri keagi

Back kick - Ushiro geri

Crescent kick - Mikazuki geri

Knee kick - Hiza geri

Blocks:

Brush block; High block - Jodan uke

Outward Middle block – Chudan soto uke

Inward Middle block - Chudan uchi uke

Low block - Gedan barai

Knife hand block - Shuto uke

Support hand block - Morote uke

Elbow block - Empi uke

Cross arm block - Juji uke

Basic Techniques and Drills continuedStances:

Attention stance

Ready stance

Horse stance - Kiba dachi

Straddle stance - Shiko dachi

Cat foot stance - Neko ashi dachi

Back stance - Kokutsu dachi

Front stance - Zenkutsu dachi

Hourglass stances - Sanchin dachi

Crane stance - Tsuru dachi

Footwork:

Some basic types of footwork used in getting closer to the opponent.

Yoriashi - move the front foot, then the back foot.

Ayumiashi - the back foot moves forward (as if walking).

Suriashi / Tsugiashi - back foot steps up to the front foot (no crossing over).

Surikomi - crossover step using the back foot.

muay Thai Techniques:

Front push, Switch kick, Inside leg kick, Power kick, Cut kick, Clinchwork

Boxing Techniques:

Punches - jab, cross, hook, uppercut, shovel hook, overhand cross

Parries - inward, outward, low, glove parry, slipping parry

Grappling:

This includes throws, takedowns, as well as seizing & controlling techniques such as joint locks, chokes, gripping, and small joint manipulation. These deal with various body points, including vital organs, muscles, joints, and nerve clusters. When using locks, maintain pressure and use pain to control or subdue the opponent.

Control all the joints in the arm when applying wrist / arm locks, and to push with your hands rather than pull. Do not allow the opponent to use his or her strength to resist - find the center of gravity and attack their weak line of movement. Use circular movements to defeat the linearity of the human body. Study kuzushi and sensitivity to understand not only grappling, but striking.

Basic Techniques and Drills continued

Some Basic Locks:

Various wrist and arm locks, Rear naked choke, Guillotine choke, leg and ankle locks

Some Basic Sweeps, Throws, Takedowns:

Major outer and inner reaps - Osoto gari, Ouchi gari

Minor outer and inner reaps - Kosoto gari, Kouchi gari

Foot sweep - Okuriashi harai, Forward foot sweep - Deashi harai

Hip toss, Shoulder throw variations

Sacrifice throw variations, Double or single leg takedown

Basic Ground Positions:

Mount, side mount / control, guard, half guard

Drills:

Alternate sparring

Take turns striking, with no blocking or hard contact.

Call sparring

Call a technique or series of techniques, and wait for your partner to confirm that he or she is ready before attacking. Your partner's goal is to successfully defend all techniques (via evasion, parrying, and/or blocking). It is then your partner's turn to attack.

When both partners have improved at this drill, they may both simply take turns delivering a short series of attacks without calling out techniques. At first, this drill should be done at half intensity with light to no contact. Also, counterattacks should not be used in this drill, as the goal is to develop quick, reflexive defenses. However, once skill is gained, counterattacks may be drilled using the following routines.

Slip and duck (Reaction and combination drill)

This drills additional body shifting against punches at close range. The key is to develop both looseness and quick reactions when cornered. At first, the hands simply protect the face. As you improve, add counter punches during and after slips and ducks. This drill may be practiced with or without striking pads.

Sensitivity drill

You and a partner face each other in fighting stances, with your hands open in guard position. You and your partner should keep your hands or arms in contact with each other throughout the drill. Practice redirection using soft techniques that flow into one another,

Basic Techniques and Drills

while maintaining good posture. As often as possible, simultaneously redirect and counter attack. Do not rush the drill at first - you and your partner will both slowly use redirection on one another - 'countering counters', so to speak. This helps 'musubi' / connection and sensitivity to direction of force, as well as bunkai. It will also help you to not depend only on your eyes at close range. This drill helps with clinchwork, Ki Ken Tai no Ichi and Hei Jo Shin.

Kuzushi (Balance breaking)

Clinch with your partner, and use momentum, body mechanics, clinchwork, foot sweeps/reaps, etc. to try to break one another's balance. Try to create openings for takedowns. Major outer reap uses the back leg on their opposite leg. Major inner reap aims for the inside (mirror image). Minor outer reap uses the front leg on the same side (mirror image). Minor inner reap aims to the opposite leg.

Shadow Boxing

Practice performing "freestyle" combinations on your own. Footwork, breathing, rhythm and flow of techniques, slipping, and a continuous active guard are among the most important things in shadow boxing. Visualize an opponent as you practice - imagine different scenarios and fighting rhythms.

If you are new to this, do it for three 1-minute rounds at half speed. As your technique and/or stamina improve, build up to at least three 3-minute rounds at full speed. Always take a one minute rest between rounds. Of course, one can always perform more rounds as desired / needed.

Once you are ready, do it with a partner at half speed. Maintain some distance from one another - and read each other's movements as you attack, defend, and use footwork. Watch angles, body language, and rhythm as you apply what you learned in previous drills. Partner shadow boxing helps adapt technical skills to a real sparring situation. Eventually, move on to light sparring. Perform strikes closer to your partner, and at full speed. However, use little to no contact until you have improved control, and have gotten used to techniques being thrown at you.

One Step Sparring – Karate Drills

One step sparring is a two person martial arts drill wherein one partner will deliver a designated, controlled strike and the other partner will take a designated type of step and perform a controlled block and counter. As a rule, all martial arts that use one step sparring will have a series of one step, two step, and/or three step drills, that follow a progression of increasing difficulty and realism. The general idea is to give students a basic idea of how to apply their blocking / parrying techniques in combination with defensive footwork and counter attacks. As students become proficient with advanced one step drills, it is important to also teach them how to vary timing, distance, level of contact, and how to create combinations of counter attacks that flow naturally after a successful defense.

This kind of pre-arranged sparring is also called 'yakusoku kumite' in some styles. The article 'Yuyo (Critical Distance)' by Dave Lowry details the principles behind this type of kumite. The article is included in his book 'Traditions: Essays on the Japanese martial ways', which is available on Google Books. Simply search the book's title at the Google Books home page - <http://books.google.com/>

I will now detail some one step sparring drills for a range of skill levels.

Basic One Step Sparring

In these basic one step drills, it is preferable to block to the outside of your opponent's attacking arm or leg, to help drill maximum safety from potential followup attacks. However, performing blocks to the inside should also be drilled, wherein students should practice multiple blocks to the inside to defend against both of the attacker's arms or legs.

Against Junzuki / progressive straight punch to lower body

Step back and perform low block; step forward and junzuki

Against Junzuki to solar plexus

Step back and perform outside block; step forward and junzuki

Against Junzuki to solar plexus

Step back and perform inside block; step forward and junzuki

Against Junzuki to face level

Step back and perform high block; step forward and junzuki

UnderstandingKarate.com

One Step Sparring Drills continued

Against Front Snap Kick to the midsection or lower body

Step forward at a 45 degree angle outside the line of attack, while performing low block, then pivot your body towards your partner and perform reverse punch. If your defensive step leaves a lot of room between you and your partner, then step in towards him or her as you punch, and use your blocking hand to 'check' their lead shoulder.

Against Roundhouse Kick to the upper body or head

Step at a 45 degree angle along the line of the attack – for example, if the attacker kicks with his or her right leg, you will step forward at an angle with your right leg, to your right. You should move in far enough and just quickly enough that you will be at close range before the kick is completed, and the attacker is able to punch effectively. As soon as you are in close range you will pivot into your partner and perform an outside block to the kicking leg – above the knee only – then complete the counter with a reverse punch.

Intermediate One Step Sparring

Against a straight punch to the lower body

Step back and perform low block, then shuffle in as you perform a back fist – reverse punch combination.

Against a straight punch to head level or midsection

Step back such that you will be able to use an inside block to the outside of the attacking arm. For example, if your partner steps in with his or her left leg, you will step back with your left leg. Immediately 'check' / trap the attacking arm with your off hand as you shuffle in and perform an elbow strike to the body.

Against a straight punch to head level or midsection

Step back such that you will be able to use an outside block to the outside of the attacking arm. For example, if your partner steps in with his or her left leg, you will step back with your right leg. Immediately open your blocking hand and perform a small brush block on the attacking arm, as you use a lead leg front kick to the midsection. Follow up with a simultaneous pull with your blocking hand and a reverse punch to the body. The pulling motion should be to the outside of the blocking hand and at a downward angle. For example, if you blocked with your left hand, you will pull to your left.

Against a wide swinging hook

Step forward with either leg and perform outside block to the forearm of the swing. If your partner swings with his or her left hand, you will block with your right hand, and vice versa. Immediately follow the outside block with a compact hook to the jaw.

One Step Sparring Drills continued

Against a high straight punch

As your partner steps in to punch, lunge forward such that you will be in a mirror image stance and perform a high block – reverse punch combination. For example, if your partner steps in with his or her left leg, you will lunge forward with your left leg.

Intermediate Front Kick Defense - Throw

Step forward at a 45 degree angle outside the line of attack, while performing low block. Slide your hand under the leg and rotate your arm upwards as you step through such that you will windmill your partner's foot upwards, and their shoulders down to the mat. Do this slowly at first with control. It is strongly recommended that you and your partner have a basic grasp on breakfalls before practicing this and the next drill.

Intermediate Roundhouse Kick Defense – Throw

Step at a 45 degree angle along the line of the attack – for example, if the attacker kicks with his or her right leg, you will step forward at an angle with your right leg, to your right. As you enter close range, begin pivoting towards the kicking leg, and perform inside block above the knee using the hand on the same side as the foot you stepped in with, and scoop the other hand under the lower leg, as you complete a 180 degree pivot. For example, if you stepped forward with your right foot, you will inside block with your right hand, and cinch the leg with the left hand. All of this should be done with one smooth motion, and done correctly you will throw your partner. Remember to use control.

Advanced One Step Sparring

Knife Hand Block Drills

Drill #1 - Your partner will step in and jab with the left hand. Step back with the left foot, pivot to the left, and redirect the attacking arm using a quick brush with the left hand. Your left arm's motion will look like the basic knife hand block setup. As you do this, your right hand will also come up into knife hand block setup. You may use this motion to practice a controlled strike to your partner's elbow joint. Follow through with a shuffle step as you trap the attacking arm with your left hand, and use a controlled downward elbow to your partner's chest to break the spinal alignment of his or her stance, then finish with a downward 'cutting' motion with your forearm. This is easier to demonstrate than to explain, so feel free to ask questions. Perform this drill on both sides.

Drill #2 – Your partner will step in and throw a wide swinging hook with their right hand. You will step back with the left foot, pivot to the left, and redirect the attacking arm with the same type of motion as in the previous drill. As you do this, you will bring your right hand into knife hand block setup with the intention of striking the bicep muscle with your elbow.

One Step Sparring Drills continued

Follow with striking to the head with either your forearm or hand, then pull down your partner's head, use a knee strike to the abdomen, and a controlled submission or elbow strike, then a takedown (such as a sweep).

Using 'Nekashido' drills to develop one step drills

The article 'In Pursuit of Perfection II' details 'Nekoashido', a system of footwork and drills. The smashing, sinking, spinning, and switching movements lend themselves very well to developing advanced drills. The drills should emphasize body shifting, counter attack combinations (including techniques such as lead leg kicks), and finishing techniques such as takedowns, holds, and locks. Students should try to use these footwork drills to develop skill in as many of their techniques as possible and gain a deeper understanding of bunkai (application of kata).

Be sure to also view my 'Martial Arts Flow Drills' YouTube video playlist. There are some excellent tutorials that explain the mechanics, principles, and techniques used. Different martial arts styles are represented. All copyrights belong to the respective publishers and their YouTube channels. Visit the below blog and click on 'Martial Arts Flow Drills Videos' -

<http://martialartsplaylist.blogspot.com/>

Kata

'A kata may be regarded as an integration of offensive and defensive techniques, but it is more than that. One should try to understand the spirit of the master karateka who created the kata, for it has a life of its own and requires five or six years to be mastered.' - Hironori Ohtsuka, Wado-Ryu founder

Kata - 'Formal movements'; in the context of Japanese martial arts, an 'imaginary fight'.

Bunkai - Principles and application of kata.

Kata list:

As I teach a formulation of Heiwado, which is based partly on Wado-Ryu, I will first list kata that have been traditionally practiced in Wado ryu at some point. These kata tend to use the Okinawan names. I include the alternate Japanese / Shotokan name for each kata in parentheses, besides the Okinawan name. After the Wado ryu kata, I list other kata that I am aware of. Keep in mind, however, that these lists are intended to be informative to those interested in kata history, rather than suggestive of what should be required to learn. Also, my information isn't complete / perfect, due to a lack of written records in early 'te' history, and ongoing debate.

Wado ryu kata

Pinan (Heian) series: Shodan, Nidan, Sandan, Yodan, and Godan

'Peaceful Mind' Numbers 1-5. Said to be created by Anko Itosu in 1905 or 1906, basing them on Kushanku, and a forgotten kata called Channan. There is some debate as to whether Kushanku was instead formulated from the Pinan series, however. Ohtsuka-meijin studied the Pinan series under both Funakoshi- and Mabuni-sensei. Ohtsuka later made modifications to these kata under the direction of Mabuni, and also used influences from Shindo Yoshin ryu jujutsu.

Kushanku (Kanku Dai)

'Gazing heavenward', 'viewing the sky', or 'contemplating the sky'. Said to be the most advanced of all Okinawan kata. Ohtsuka-sensei studied Kushanku under Funakoshi- and Mabuni-sensei.

Chinto (Gankaku)

'Fighting to the East' / 'Crane on a Rock'. Formulated in Tomari from the teachings of a Chinese sailor of the same name, this kata was based mostly on White Crane Kung-Fu and later adopted into shuri-te. Ohtsuka-sensei studied variations of this kata under masters Funakoshi and Mabuni.

Kata continuedSeishan (Hangetsu)

'13 Hands'/'Crescent Moon'. It is based on movements brought from Fukien to Okinawa circa 1700. Ohtsuka-sensei also knew and taught the shuri-te version of Seishan.

Naifanchi / Naihanchi (Tekki Shodan)

'Holding your ground', 'The Iron Horse', or 'Battlefield'. Named after naihanchi dachi (also known as kiba dachi), which the kata centers around. This kata was transmitted by Matsumura-sensei throughout Shuri and Tomari sometime before 1825. Master Ohtsuka learned Naifanchi from Motobu-sensei.

Bassai

'Extract from a fortress' or 'remove an obstruction'. An Tomari-te kata that uses dynamic stances and hip rotation. The Shotokan, Shito, and Wado ryu versions of Bassai are directly based upon Master Itosu's Bassai. Ohtsuka learned Bassai from Funakoshi.

Wanshu (Empi)

'Dumping Form'. A Tomari-te kata based on movements brought to Okinawa in 1683 by Wanshu, which is the Okinawan adapted name of the Wang Ji. Wanshu was a practitioner of the Shaolin tradition of Fujian White Crane. Ohtsuka-sensei learned Wanshu from Master Funakoshi.

Jion

'Temple Sounds' / 'In the Jion-ji Shaolin Temple'. A Tomari-te kata, it is named after Jion-Je, a Buddhist temple. Ohtsuka studied this kata under Funakoshi and Mabuni.

Jutte (Jitte - alternate spelling)

'Ten Hands'. It is said that anyone who masters this Tomari-te kata has the strength of 5 men. Ohtsuka studied this kata under Funakoshi and Mabuni.

Rohai (Meikyo)

'Vision of a crane' or 'vision of a heron'. Originally a Tomari-te kata, a version of it was taught by Itosu-sensei, who formulated three versions of it (Rohai Shodan, Rohai Nidan, Rohai Sandan). Itosu Rohai was taught by Master Mabuni to Ohtsuka. The Rohai practiced in Wado is known as Rohai Shodan, in Shotokan. The Shotokan version, Meikyo, translates 'clear mirror' or 'mirror of the soul'.

Suparimpei (Pechurrin - Chinese name)

'108 Steps' (represents the 108 evil spirits of man). Developed from a Chinese form used in systems including Dragon Boxing and Tiger Boxing. Practiced in Wado.

Kata continuedNiseishi (Nijushiho)

Transmitted by Ankichi Aragaki, variations of this Shuri-te kata exist in Shotokan, Shito, and Wado.

Unsu (Unshu - alternate spelling)

'Defense of a Cloud' or 'Cloud Hand'. This Tomari-te kata is practiced in Shotokan, Shito, and Wado.

Kihon Kumite Kata (Basic Sparring Forms):

These kata are two-person drills.

Ipponme / Nihonme / Sanbonme / YohonmeGohonme / Rokuhonme / Shichihonme / HachibonmeKyuhonme / Juhonme**List of other kata (terribly incomplete!)**Kihon Kata Shodan / Nidan / Sandan

Basic Forms 1, 2, and 3 as practiced in various Heiwado dojo.

Sei Shi

'24 Steps'. A Shorin-ryu kata performed in 3 directions - the points of a triangle.

Seipai

Variations exist in Goju-ryu and Shito-ryu. It was influenced by White Crane Kung-Fu.

Annan

A Shito-ryu kata that primarily uses open hand techniques. It also has a Goju variation. Annan has great versatility and speed in its self defense techniques.

Gojushiho Sho, Gojushiho Dai

'Lesser 54 steps' and 'Greater 54 steps'. Both are Shotokan kata.

Ji'in

Variations exist in Shotokan, Shito & Wado.

Nipaipo

A Shito kata with a Chinese flair.

Kata continued**Bunkai**

Bunkai, or application of technique, assists in understanding the movements once they have been learned. Kaisetsu, or learning the principles behind the movements, may then be drilled, so as to assist in learning how to adapt and apply kata. As such, there should not be any one prescribed method for teaching bunkai. As such, drilling the following bunkai is not meant to be 'the only way', but instead meant to help gain a basic understanding of "kaisetsu".

Kihon Kata Shodan

Basic awareness, stances, defenses, attack angles, economy of motion, & focus. High Blocks 2 & 3 may be used as strikes.

Kihon Kata Nidan

This kata builds on the previous one by drilling kick-punch combinations.

Kihon Kata Sandan

It teaches power generation through hip twisting and body torque as well as momentum.

Pinan Shodan

This kata helps movements become stable, efficient, and intimidating. The first technique, 'c block', sets up for a redirection. Even the sword hand blocks can become attacks.

Pinan Nidan

This kata instructs further on timing, distance management, and counter-attacking quickly.

Pinan Sandan

This kata helps with body shifting, consistency of stances, and redirection of attack. The middle & low blocks in the beginning may be termed 'continuous block', which may be interpreted in many ways. The turn after the spearhand strike, and follow-up with the outward hammerfist, can be seen as twisting out of the opponent's grappling of your arm, and countering.

The use of the elbows in horse stance may be either strikes or strong blocks. This may be interpreted in many ways in close quarters. The last moves of the kata may be seen as elbowing to both the back and front, breaking rear grapples with an elbow to each opponent's abdomen and a hook to the face, or a powerful hook or elbow to an opponent in front.

Pinan Yodan

Stepping into a back stance as you double block disrupts the opponent's movement, as you simultaneously block and counter. Blocking behind you immediately after the initial blocks cuts a sneak attack short. The low block, front snap kick, and elbow combination will

Kata continued

block, stumble, and knock out an opponent. The sequence after the second elbow assists in learning how to follow through with attacks, and helps practice economy of motion.

The cross-block that begins the second half of the kata counters a grab attempt. Pulling the hand back as you kick may be interpreted as trapping the opponent's arm under yours, and pulling him/her into a kick to the groin.

Pinan Godan

The high cross block sets up for an arm lock, tetsui, and finishing punch. The jump ends with a strike to a fallen opponent. The palm strikes followed by pulling motions represent attacking the groin and causing severe trauma to it.

Kushanku

The Pinan kata help understand Kushanku, as there are many similarities. The slow motions are used for breathing and focus, but may often be used as blocks and/or attacks. Practice consistency in stances, torque, and momentum in this kata.

In the second half, the sequence that ends with a punch to the ground represents blocking a kick, throwing the opponent, and knocking him/her out. The next sequence blocks and throws an opponent, then jumps over him/her to kick another, and follows through with a finishing strike. The last sequence is a takedown with a knockout blow.

Naihanchi

Naihanchi develops lower body strength. It also teaches one to settle all one's strength in the abdomen/center and draw from it. The methods employed in Naihanchi are best applied and interpreted in a narrow space.

Bassai

Bassai builds a stronger, more efficient defense. The first two middle blocks may be seen as a kick counter and takedown; the backfists near the end may also be used this way by performing scooping blocks to set up for the attacks. The crescent kick redirects an attack, so as to set up for the elbow strike. After the elbow is 3 sets of double strikes to counter a rear grapple attempt.

Wanshu

Wanshu, like Bassai, is technical and efficient, but is of a more aggressive nature. It is also a study in timing and follow-through. Stepping into side stance as you set up for a low block may be seen as body shifting to dodge an attack, as you move in to punch the opponent. The jump represents stomping on a downed opponent while preparing to block an attack from another.

Kata continued

Jion

Jion is very direct, yet powerful, stable, and technical. Its use of stances will greatly assist your footwork. Remember, the physical side of fighting is done from the ground up.

The first technique may be considered as a striking block, and its uses are numerous. Compare this to Pinan Sandan. The low block and middle block in back stance sequence sets up for a pulling block and punch counter.

Seipai

Seipai uses a small structure to reinforce mobility. Due to the Crane influence, Seipai is a study in entering and parrying. The first combination blocks and pulls a low attack, then knocks the attacker down. The rolling motion of the arms after the turn, low block, middle block, and mawashi uke combination represents a damaging arm lock. In a variation of Seipai, juji uke is performed just before the sweep. The last two strikes of the kata knock the opponent down, then out.

Gojushiho Sho

This kata is a study in close quarters techniques. The first sequence is a double wrist block, and counter attack. The sequences after the elbow strike represent a kick counter, nukite, and grapple counter. The last sequence represents blocking an attack to the midsection, blocking a grapple attempt, then counter attacking to the collar bones.

Annan

Annan contains many practical, efficient counter attack methods. It is also useful in practicing breathing and focus. Raising the knee and striking with the finger may represent blocking a kick, then hitting the vital point below the ear. Stepping into horse stance, extending the hands, and clinching them into fists will jam the opponent, and grab him/her to gain control for the side kick. The 'ox jaw' wrist blocks near the end block a middle punch, then knock the shoulder out of joint.

Shu Shi no Kon / Shuji no Kon

The bo (staff) is known for its versatility, speed, power, and adaptability, and ease of use. Shu Shi no Kan is a great example of this, as well as an excellent training aid. Once learned and understood staff skills may be applied to makeshift weapons.

The usage of both ends of the staff allows a great degree of control. This also enables may long range (yet deceptively fast) block-and-counter techniques. The use of centrifugal force also adds to the power. We must remember, however, to treat the staff as an extension of our existing karate techniques - and practice accordingly.

Kata continued

Seishan

Seishan is direct yet graceful. The primary stances used are seishan dachi, tate seishan, and shikodachi. The footwork and a number of the techniques utilize forward whipping movement for speed and impact. The open handed blocks near the beginning may counter grappling as well as strikes. These blocks may also be seen as double spear hands. Also, in the second half of the kata, what appears to be a shortened high block may be used as a wrist block, and the jammed front snap kick becomes a knee kick.

Overview:

Aside from the dojo precepts, kata is traditionally Karate-do's primary tool for personal development. It is the textbook of Karate-do that is to be learned, understood, and applied. It is the tool by which Karate-do demonstrates fighting principles, but also creates unity in one's body, mind, and soul.

What may seem unnatural motions become second nature with training and practice. Kata assists in drilling good habits, and replacing bad ones. Once the techniques have been absorbed, patterns, principles, and body mechanics may be understood. The 'art' of 'martial art' is understanding these underlying ideas, that guide techniques and give them meaning. A technique is not just a strike or block, but also the factors necessary for those to work (timing, movement, and so forth). By practicing kata, and drilling 'bunkai', you will learn to apply principles with no extra 'clutter'.

The fighting principles, when well applied, will work in many situations. Awareness and defensive principles help avoid, assess, or diffuse encounters. The search for unity means we should use lethal force as a last resort. The key is to move last, but hit first. In this way, there is no first strike in karate, but we meet force with a passive counter. Look for new ways to interpret kata - many secrets may be found...or created.

Mentally, kata teaches focus, and attention to all angles. One must cut through disclarity of mind to understand kata, and with this a growing process takes place. You will find bunkai where you did not before, as you imagine the problems the kata creators faced. This problem solving that kata teaches is invaluable. It balances the mind and grounds it to a reality that is still unpredictable, yet enriched by clearer understanding.

Physically, kata enforces proper use of body structure. It also strengthens the muscles through natural body weight exercises. Practiced vigorously, kata improves cardiovascular efficiency. Kata is therapeutic and empowering.

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Kata continued

Spiritually, kata provides a path of self awareness. In practicing or even creating new kata, one builds resolve. In aiming for mastery, one builds patience. In either, one has to continually search in and outside of themselves, that one may learn how to apply the truths contained within kata.

The book 'Kata: The Folk Dances of Shotokan' details much, much more information than I could summarize into this article without doing a severe disservice to the overall value the book provides. Please read it for free at the link below -

<http://www.24fightingchickens.com/kata/>

Philosophy

The following material is what I personally teach. However, regional and personal differences will necessarily make for different experiences in every martial arts school.

Purpose of Karate Training

To stand for peace, harmony, and truth!

Dojo Precepts

Perfect one's character!

Dedicate oneself to others!

Uphold honor, bravery, and justice!

Never stop learning!

Obtain victory without conflict!

Mukso (Meditation)

Meditation warms up the mind before training, and cools down the mind after training. After training, meditate on what you did well, and what you want to work on next time.

Bowing

Shomen ni rei - Bow to the front

Otagai ni rei - Bow to each other

Traditions

- 1) Do not wear anything on your feet on the training floor, or anything that inhibits training.
- 2) Courtesy / Respect: Bow when entering and leaving the training floor. Bow when a teacher enters or leaves the training floor. Say 'Thank you' or 'Arigato' and 'Hai, sensei', 'Yes sir', or 'Yes ma'am' often. Ask the teacher first before you leave the floor for any reason.
- 3) Relationships: Teacher-Student (oyabun-kobun) and Senior-Junior (sempai-kohai). In Japanese tradition, the relationship of master and apprentice is comparable to that of parent and child.
- 4) Honor: Carry yourself in an honorable fashion in dealing with people in and out of the dojo. In the dojo, this includes respecting your classmates and teachers by giving them your best. Outside of the dojo, this includes doing the best you can for others.

Terms

Pronunciation

Ei is like long a, ai is like ie in pie, y is like long e

General

Dojo	- 'Place of the Way'; training hall
Sensei	- 'One who comes before'; Instructor
Sempai	- Senior Student
Kohai	- Junior Student
Hai	- Yes
Osu	- A greeting used in various styles.
Karate-do	- 'Way of the Empty Hand'; Founded in Okinawa as a system of self-defense & conduct

Commands

Yoi	- Ready
Kiyotsuke rei	- Line up, bow
Jiyu kumite	- Free sparring
Hajime	- Start
Yame	- Stop
Mawate	- Turn
Seiza	- Formal sitting position
Mukso	- Concentration / Meditation
Shomen ni rei	- Bow to the front
Otagai ni rei	- Bow to each other
Tate	- Stand up
Moichido	- One more time

Counting

Ichi	- One
Ni	- Two
San	- Three
Shi	- Four
Go	- Five
Roku	- Six
Shichi	- Seven
Hachi	- Eight
Ku	- Nine
Juu	- Ten

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Terms continued

(Note: 'Shi' may also be pronounced 'yo' or 'yon', since 'Shi' can also mean death. 'Shichi' is alternatively pronounced 'nana', and 'Ku' is alternatively pronounced 'kyuu'.)

Karate Precepts

Perfect one's character:

Do not harbor hatred and bitterness. Negativity breeds negativity. Love one another. Enough cannot be said on this.

Dedicate oneself to others:

And not just to oneself. Selfishness leads to hate, which leads to anger. Anger consumes all in its path and is never quenched, except by effort, which rebuilds. This may be one's own effort, or the effort of another, changing your nature and your life from the inside out. This will influence those around you.

Uphold honor, bravery, and justice:

In these you will find right paths. Selfishness corrupts. Patience instructs. Only time will tell.

Never stop learning:

Always consider following right paths. Think not on the way of life or death. Do not settle for less than truth, or you will be deceived. Letting go of life too quickly is not always honorable. Let go of concern for your life or death; seek only honor and truth. Focus only on these, then pain and deception turn into lessons, or blessings. You must always seek greater understanding, so you may seek greater truth.

Obtain victory without conflict:

The paramount of skill is victory without conflict. Preserve the whole using your empty hand. You must practice preserving the whole in every thing.

Karate Principles

'The ultimate aim of karate lies not in victory or defeat, but in the perfection of the character of its participants.' - Gichin Funakoshi, founder of Shotokan Karate

The underlying principles of karate-do (Way of the Empty Hand) include not only self-defense, but a system of learning that provides one with a tool for self-improvement. Its accessibility is shown by its ability to be practiced hard or soft, by nearly anyone, and nearly anywhere, even in one's own mind. Its precepts and discipline can lead us on in the difficult times of our lives. This is the connection of body, mind, and soul.

'There is no first strike in karate.' - Gichin Funakoshi

Karate-do is a way of life that teaches one to be the best he or she can be, in spite of and because of the worst situations that one faces. Karate is a code of conduct that avoids conflict; its level of force is only stepped up if absolutely necessary. In this way, karate may be used to defend oneself and others without striking a single blow.

Way of the Empty Hand

Karate is not simply a method of empty handed combat, but also a way of peace. Keep your mind open to the situation, and to the Truth. Do not miss the forest for the trees. Cut through all the hype and find understanding. Your hand, the human hand, is the most versatile physical tool on the planet. Your mind is an even more versatile tool. It is the tool of your human soul, human instincts. In that way, your mind is a hand, reaching out for truth, greater things. Therefore, Karate is the way of uniting body, mind, and soul, that one may be a sharpened tool. Once one has learned Karate, its textbook of technique, philosophy, kata, one should digest it and make it part of one's nature. Continue to sharpen yourself, refining what you have learned, using it to your advantage and the good of others.

Karate Syllabus

All rank requirements for Mizuumi ryu, the style of Johnston Karate, are listed below. Be sure to review all relevant articles on the drills, principles, etc. that you will need to know for your examination. New students begin at 1st student rank. Starting with 3rd rank, each rank examination will cover all material from previous ranks. Students in the 'student' ranks will be expected to learn at least a basic grasp of the 'bunkai' (application) of each of the required kata. The level of contact used in sparring at 7th rank and above may be lowered in light of any relevant health concerns.

In addition to knowing the material, students must also regularly participate in classes for at least 4 months after passing a rank examination before being eligible for testing again. Examination candidates will be chosen by the instructor(s) based on each student's confidence in the material, time in training, character, and work ethic.

Junior student rank requirements**1st Rank**

A willingness to learn!

2nd rank

Basic footwork and stances - attention and ready stances, boxing and karate stances, horse stance. Shuffling footwork for each direction while using combinations.

Basics of Boxing - basic punches (jab, cross, outside & shovel hooks, uppercut, overhand cross), slips, ducks, parries, the clinch.

Karate techniques - Low, inside, outside, and high blocks; front snap kick, knee kick; Reverse punch, elbow, palm strike

Drills - Alternate & call sparring, breakfalls, slip & duck, kuzushi, shadow boxing

3rd rank**Karate techniques**

Blocks: Knifehand

Strikes: Knifehand, Four finger spearhand thrust

Stances: Back stance

Karate Kata – Kihon Kata Series (Shodan, Nidan, Sandan)

Sparring - Basic one step sparring drills against junzuki; two 2-minute rounds of light contact sparring

Karate Syllabus continued**4th rank****Karate techniques**

Hammer fist, leg checks, backfist, ridgehand, roundhouse kick, cat stance

Footwork: Step up, step across, pivoting

Karate Kata – Pinan Nidan

Sparring –

Basic one step sparring drills against kicks

Two 2-minute rounds of light contact, and one 2-minute round of medium contact.

Students should also know a few basic grappling / lock escapes by this rank.

5th rank**Karate techniques**

Blocks: Support hand / augmented block

Kicks: Crescent kicks, back kick

Karate Kata – Pinan Shodan

Sparring -

Three 2-minute rounds of medium contact sparring, and a basic grasp of using footwork and techniques while in horse stance.

6th rank**Karate techniques**

Kicks: Side kick, lead leg kicks with and without footwork, double kicks

Karate Kata – Pinan Sandan

Sparring - Intermediate one step sparring drills

Two 3-minute rounds of medium contact sparring, and one 3-minute round of hard contact.

Senior student rank requirements**7th rank – equivalent of brown belt****Improvements upon the basics**

Students are expected to show improvements in body shifting, counter attacking, footwork, in-fighting, transitioning between ranges, and overall 'ringwork' / tactics. Students should also have improved fitness and flexibility, as well as confidence in and at least some personalization of basic techniques.

Karate Syllabus continued

Stances – Crane stance

Blocks – Brush block, Elbow block, Cross arm block

Strikes – One knuckle punch

Karate Kata – Pinan Yodan, Pinan Godan

Sparring – One 3-minute round of medium contact, and two 3-minute rounds of hard contact. Students should also be proficient with basic kata applications for knifehand block, hammer fist block, elbow block, and brush block.

Grappling basics

Clinchwork, locks and holds, throws and takedowns, groundwork positions, transitions, and basic tactics. At least a basic familiarity with these will be required.

Minimum training time and age

Students must train regularly for a minimum of 2 years to attain this rank, and the minimum age is 13.

Note

Candidates should be very dependable and dedicated, as well as be willing to assist in teaching classes.

8th rank

Kicks – Basics of spin kicks

Footwork - Students must have a grasp on the basics of all of the types of footwork of 'Nekoashido' (refer back to 'In Pursuit of Perfection II'). Students will be expected to start learning to adapt using different techniques in combination with these types of footwork.

Karate Kata – Naihanchi

Sparring – One 3-minute round of medium contact, and two 3-minute rounds of hard contact.

Advanced one step sparring drills

Karate Syllabus continued**9th rank**

Karate Kata – Bassai

Sparring – Three 3-minute rounds of hard contact. Students should be showing progress in adapting and personalizing their techniques, as well as demonstrating combinations, and improved reactions.

10th rank

Karate Kata – Wanshu

Overall

Students will be considered ready for 10th rank when they demonstrate considerable improvement in overall strategy, technical proficiency, dependability, and dedication. Grappling skills, footwork, strikes, kicks, blocks, combinations, defense, and counter attacks should all flow together, as well as show significant improvements and less technical flaws. Free sparring should show an advanced level of adaptation and focus. Overall, students should show a good understanding of and proficiency in the proper use of body mechanics.

Knowledge and Character

Students should be able to demonstrate at least a basic knowledge of the lineage of their style, as well as improved character, and a dedication to refining themselves even further as they walk the road to Instructor ranks. Essentially, the student must show, with his or her attitude, knowledge, and training ethic, that he or she is willing to begin training to become an instructor. This path is less about learning more techniques and more about adapting and combining the techniques you already know, as well as learning how it all fits into a cohesive system.

Sparring - Three 3-minute rounds of hard contact.

Karate Syllabus continued**Instructor Rank Requirements****Rank 1 – equivalent of shodan / 1st degree black belt****Technical Requirements:****Personal Polish, Proficiency in Maai, Knowledge, Other Qualities**

The major difference between the student and instructor ranks is not simply the number of techniques known, but also the mastery of those techniques. The instructor candidate must also demonstrate improved overall conditioning, knowledge, strategy, discipline, and fighting ability. An increased depth of knowledge and understanding of the required kata will also be expected. The candidate must demonstrate proficiency in all previous requirements, as well as an overall technical polish. He or she should possess compact, personalized, and internalized technique.

Proficiency in ranges, timing, and distancing ("ma-ai") should also be demonstrated. Candidates should be able to clearly explain how techniques work, how they work together, and how to manage ma-ai. The candidate must also show at least a basic proficiency in the principles of Zanshin, Haragei, Mushin, Ki Ken Tai no Ichi, and Hei Jo Shin. Lastly, the candidate should have improved knowledge about the lineage and history of karate, as well as show a high degree of dependability in helping junior students. Essentially, a student testing for Instructor status should demonstrate a great degree of knowledge and maturity, as well as overall mastery of the basics, with few to no technical flaws.

Sparring

The candidate will be expected to be able to spar at 3 junior students (6th rank or below) and at least 2 senior students. The level of contact used will be dictated by the level of the candidate's partner.

Karate Kata – Kushanku

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Karate Syllabus continued

Physical Requirements:

The candidate must have a thoroughly improved foundation of functional strength and endurance. You must be able to -

- Explain the body mechanics behind the exercises, as well as be able to teach students how to develop their own routines and progressions.
- Write brief, intense training programs for students of different fitness levels
- Run at least 1 mile, age and health allowing. Skipping rope or another type of aerobic exercise may be substituted if running is not feasible.
- Demonstrate skill and strength in the exercise progressions for pushups, pullups, leg raises, and squats. At your examination, you should be able to perform what is called the "Century Test" -

<http://pccbog.dragondoor.com/al-kavadlo-century/>

Minimum training time and age -

In addition to meeting the physical and technical requirements, students must also train regularly for at least 2 years after attaining 7th rank before being eligible to test for instructor rank. The minimum age is 15.

Karate Syllabus continued**Rank 2 – Senior Instructor****Primary Requirement – Personal Development**

The senior instructor candidate must primarily make efforts to completely internalize, polish, perfect, and personalize all of the basic techniques and principles. Attaining the instructor level is a sign of the student having 'learned how to learn'. In other words, he or she has learned all of the tools and basics needed to develop as his or her own martial artist, not just as a product of the style. A senior instructor candidate must be the natural development of this process.

The candidate must also adapt the basic techniques to his or her own personal style. This must be demonstrated in shadow boxing, combinations, kata, sparring drills, and free sparring. Improvements in balance, speed, power, focus, coordination, and agility will be among the primary qualities looked for.

With this in mind, the candidate must be able to demonstrate a much deeper knowledge of the general principles of movement and body mechanics as they relate to martial arts and fitness. As such, the candidate must have an in-depth knowledge of all of the kata required for junior instructor, as well as be able to confidently teach up to junior instructor level classes. Also, junior instructors must be able to demonstrate a notable improvement in overall technical ability and physical conditioning before finally being considered ready to testing for senior instructor.

Technical Drills

The candidate must also have a thorough understanding of the Mizuumi ryu Karate technical drills 'Nekoashido', listed in 'In Pursuit of Perfection II', such that he or she will be able to help students develop their fighting ability through these drills. He or she must also develop at least 4 advanced sparring drills. The drills should demonstrate his or her own personalized style and knowledge of different types of techniques. The drills should also demonstrate economy of movement and effectiveness for self defense.

Karate Kata -

Seipai, Gojushiho Sho, Jion, Annan, Seishan

Karate Syllabus continued**Ryukyu kobujutsu -**

Bo kihon

Shuji no Kon Sho

See the Yuishinkai Kobujutsu syllabus for rank requirements in the Ryukyu kobujutsu system.

<http://www.yuishinkai.info/syllabus>

Improved knowledge of grappling and joint locks -

The candidate must demonstrate ability in the application of such techniques. At least one year of training in a grappling style is recommended.

Minimum training time and age -

Students must train regularly for at least 3 years after attaining junior instructor status. The minimum age is 18.

Participation in teaching -

The candidate must also regularly help teach classes.

Improved Physical Conditioning

Candidates should be able to display at least basic proficiency in more calisthenics progressions, including bridging, hand balancing, and statics. Unilateral exercises (one arm or one leg) are the goals.

Karate Syllabus continued**3rd Instructor Rank - Full Proficiency****General Requirement**

The candidate must strive to be a well rounded martial artist and human being. The goal is to improve physical ability, teaching ability, depth of understanding of martial arts in general, and personal self expression of technique without being bound by stylistic limitations. The candidate should be able to explain at least 3 major benefits that martial arts training has given him or her. One should also demonstrate improved character and dedication to others.

Physical Conditioning

The candidate must have a thoroughly improved foundation of functional strength and endurance. You must be able to demonstrate skill and strength in the calisthenics progressions for pushups, pullups, leg raises, squats, bridges, and handstands / handstand pushups (age / health allowing), l-sit, and levers. You must also be able to explain the body mechanics behind the exercises, as well as be able to teach students how to develop their own routines and progressions. You should also be able to run at least 1 mile, age and health allowing. Skipping rope or another type of aerobic exercise may be substituted if running is not feasible.

The candidate must also demonstrate and explain a deeper knowledge of physical culture. Knowledge must be demonstrated through an essay on an area of personal research into any area of fitness. Ideas include, but are not limited to, nutrition, cardiovascular health, and comparing various types of strength training. The essay must be at least 250 words. Be prepared to give an oral outline of the basic points. You must also write example training programs that include your reasoning for the exercise selection, as well as a 12-week training cycle. There is no word minimum. Lastly, obtaining a fitness trainer certification is recommended, but not required.

Teaching Ability

The candidate must be able to demonstrate a vastly improved teaching ability. This includes a deeper knowledge of body mechanics, kata, helping students to adapt to different situations and techniques, and so forth. At your examination, you must be prepared to conduct a half hour long formal class on a kata of choice. You will also be expected to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of terminology, philosophy, and general principles.

Karate Syllabus continued**Knowledge of Martial Arts**

The candidate must demonstrate and explain a deeper knowledge of martial arts in general. Knowledge must be demonstrated through an essay on an area of personal research into any area of martial arts. Ideas include, but are not limited to, investigating other arts, learning the history of karate as a whole, using scientific research to benefit the study of martial arts, and comparing forms or drills of various styles. The essay must be at least 1,000 words. Be prepared to give an oral outline of the basic points.

Improved Strategy

You must also be able to demonstrate an improved knowledge of strategy by being able to easily adapt to different fighting styles and sparring partners. The goal is to not be limited by style – instead of simply demonstrating mastery of style. Your fighting ability must demonstrate honest self expression of technique, streamlined simplicity, and freedom from stylistic limitations.

Minimum training time -

Students must train regularly for at least 4 years after attaining senior instructor status.

Helping Others

The candidate must teach regularly and be a good influence on others, in and out of the dojo. One should aim to be not just a better martial artist, but a better human being overall. Seek to make a positive impact on society – compassion is more important than all the technique in the world!

Makiwara Board Training for Karate

A makiwara board, a padded striking post traditionally used in some karate styles, is one of my most recommended types of training equipment for karate practitioners. It is the most recognizable of the "hojo undo", or "supplemental training equipment", used in the Okinawan fighting methods now known as karate. There are a few different type of makiwara, which share the purpose of helping develop correct technique, power generation, and conditioning of the hands, arms, and feet.

Makiwara can either be purchased very affordably, or you can construct your own if you have access to the needed materials. A makiwara can be attached to a wall, suspended, or freestanding. The Tachi-makiwara (or, freestanding makiwara) is made up of a several foot long post buried in the ground, such that the striking pad will reach about shoulder height. Traditionally, rope is used to bind a pad of rice straw to the top to create a striking surface. (Maki = roll; Wara = straw.) Other materials such as duct tape are suitable, however. Other traditional types of makiwara include age-makiwara (hanging), ude-makiwara (round on all sides), tou-makiwara (bamboo stalks or cane). The smaller and more commonly seen makiwara boards are usually made of a pad that is covered with canvas and fixed to a board, then mounted to a wall. There are some variations, such as clapper and portable makiwara. For more details on all these types and ideas for construction, please view -

<http://www.amerikangdukwon.org/makiwara.pdf>

The resistance provided by the makiwara when it is struck gets the body used to hard contact and encourages proper form. A poorly formed technique will often bounce off the makiwara because the body was not in correct alignment to transfer power through the technique. When training on the makiwara, you will want to carefully, slowly strike it in such a way that you will condition your striking tools for delivering techniques, but also the rest of your 'power chain'. This includes your legs, hips, and shoulders. In this way, you train them to coordinate and move in such a way that you can get the most stability and power out of your techniques. These include your open and closed hand strikes, kicks, elbows, and so forth – makiwara training allows for a lot of variety in technique. With enough practice on the board your striking areas will adapt and strengthen the bones, and connective tissues used for the strikes.

While callouses commonly form over the knuckles with enough practice on the makiwara, this is not the goal – it should merely be a side effect. You must take great care in makiwara training, and always use proper technique. While you do want to learn how to strike the makiwara with at least a moderate degree of force, you also want to make sure you learn correct ways to strike it, then take it slowly when doing so. As you progress with makiwara training, you can gradually increase the speed and force of your strikes. Be sure to use

Makiwara Board Training for Karate continued

something like Dit Da Jow or similar liniment after training on the makiwara.

Before you begin any training with makiwara or other impact tools, be sure to find a qualified instructor so that he or she can supervise your makiwara training. This will help you to learn control and proper technique in your striking, which will prevent injuries and also make sure you know how to get the most out of your makiwara training. Persons under 16 years of age should avoid hitting the makiwara with excessive force. Always begin striking the makiwara with a low number of light strikes, and always err on the side of caution. If any kind of swelling, bruises, tearing of the skin, etc. happens, cease makiwara training until you have fully healed. Injury prevention is very important to keep in mind as you engage in any kind of physical activity, especially when using makiwara! As such, never engage in makiwara training, or any other kind of training, to the point of over-training or injury. Your health is the most important thing!

As noted before, there are many different types of makiwara. There are many offered online for purchase, but as also noted, it is important to understand the uses of the makiwara, as well as differences between the types of makiwara available. I highly recommend reading the book 'The Art of Hojo Undo' – available in print and for Kindle, via Amazon - for details on these types, as well as training exercises, and even how to construct your own. Having your own custom makiwara may be preferable to purchasing a makiwara board if you need something that has more 'give' or allows for more variety of techniques and footwork to be used (such as an ude-makiwara).

If you would like to use other types of resistance for your striking techniques, please keep the following point in mind. When conditioning your striking tools, you should not use any surface for training that has no "give" or cushion of any kind, or is harder than your own body. This includes trees, bricks, and walls. If you would like to add cushioning though, try wrapping heavy duty rope or old thick carpet around a tree. There are also various types of wall punch pads that can be attached to a wall. To preview or purchase makiwara boards, makiwara bags, wall punch pads, and other training tools, as well as the book 'The Art of Hojo Undo', view this page -

<http://astore.amazon.com/makiwara-20>

Makiwara training is only one of many methods used in 'hojo undo.' The book 'The Art of Hojo Undo' has a lot of excellent information on this ancient style of training that was developed as part of the Okinawan fighting methods now known as karate. The exercises used in hojo undo are highly functional, and closely relate to the types of movement that you use in

Makiwara Board Training for Karate continued

kata. The book contains information and diagrams for not only various exercises, but describes related techniques, and how to construct equipment. The author also draws similarities between various techniques used in different styles, how the exercises benefit techniques, and even devotes a chapter to warmup exercises, which is important in injury prevention. Last, but not least, there are some details on the history of karate as well as the differences between "traditional karate" and today's modernized "sport karate".

The ancient training methods described in this book show you how the old masters taught their students to not only toughen their bodies, but toughen their minds, as well as develop spiritual discipline through dedicated training. This helped them become complete warriors. Not only that, the training methods are of great benefit to almost any martial arts style, even various types of wrestling and other grappling arts, because of the benefit to grip strength and explosiveness.

Primary sources used for this article -

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en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makiwara

www.americkangdukwon.org/makiwara.pdf

To view pictures and descriptions of 'hojo undo' and 'odd object training' equipment that we have put together, visit my odd object training blog and click on the link near the top that says 'Our Hojo Undo and odd object training equipment (pictures)' -

<http://oddobjecttraining.blogspot.com/>

Strategy

In the broad view, a warrior must uphold the values of his or her society to be of any honorable use. We all depend on one another. The warrior must quell disorder, promote peace, and cultivate character. In practicing the ways of war, one has an obligation to not use them in an illegal or immoral fashion.

Let us now consider fighting tactics. First, we must understand self defense. One should exercise caution in the use of force. Awareness must have the highest priority.

In self defense, one must be able to read the situation and potential adversary. Pay attention to the neighborhood, your own mental and physical state, as well as the mental state of potential attackers. One can never be too careful. When visiting a new area, stay in well lit areas that seem safe. Also try to find good information on the right places to stay if you are going to be in town for a while.

There are many articles on the uses of makeshift weapons, and weapon disarms. Not all such articles are realistic, nor are any of them a substitute for hands-on defense training. They may be a supplement to such training from a true instructor. The broken rhythm of fighting, the form without form, and the warrior's mindset are difficult to learn without guidance.

Blend with or break the opponent's energy, rhythm, or attitude. Read timings/habits quickly. This is applied hand to hand combat, large scale combat, and overall strategy. You must be ready to defend yourself as soon as you leave your home, even if you are sick, caught off guard, outnumbered, or overwhelmed by a stronger attacker. You must be prepared for the worst. End the fight as soon and as peacefully as possible; simplicity and instinct are key!

Many fights actually begin at or near home; before a disagreement turns into an altercation, try to defuse the situation. In any altercation, use positive reinforcement. 'I know / am sure you're a nice person, but I would rather not (fill in the blank).' Remember, martial arts are not just collections of fighting techniques, but 'arts' by which we defend the quality of life for ourselves and others.

'Budo' and 'kung fu' have rather holistic meanings for everyday life, and not simply 'martial arts', as they are so commonly translated. In this sense, 'martial art' may itself take on a new meaning. 'Martial' certainly connotes fighting tactics, yet 'art' presents a deeper level of understanding. Do everything you can to 'preserve the whole'. Do not fight if possible - take the path of least resistance if conflict is inevitable. Fight out of necessity rather than hostility.

An attacker believes he/she has an advantage. This may include a weapon, surprise, strength, and so forth. He / she is also more likely to attack you if he / she sees you as a potential victim. Therefore, be cautious when you are fatigued or alone, and do not appear

Strategy continued

timid, even if you are smaller than potential attackers. Always try to stay aware, and prepared to talk your way out of a situation, or defend yourself.

The environment, mindset of the attacker, and effects of panic will further handicap you. Your attackers do not come at you in prearranged patterns. You have to be ready to fight back, and take the initiative, because every second counts!

The best defense is a good offense. Use distance and the environment; be spontaneous. This is all very important against multiple assailants! Your movements must be fluid, economical, and not overly mechanical. The longer the fight, the more dangerous it becomes! When in unfamiliar territory, scan for escape routes, taking potential obstacles into account. Don't forget pepper spray, pinching, biting, etc. to provide distractions. Overall, you want to be as prepared as possible for potential violence.

When faced with a heavy handed puncher, his or her hand speed and upper body defenses may be hard to match or get past. In this case, timing and creativity are of high priority. In a street situation, you do not have time to memorize his or her habits. Watch for openings in the attacks, and draw out your opponent for a timed hit. Don't forget use of body shifting; especially to the outside of the opponent, which will present you with a strategic advantage. This reduces his / her options by 50%. This will be easier or harder to do depending on the attacker's training; such is hard to judge immediately, so it is instead better to take the initiative and/or counter-hit as quickly and efficiently as possible. Untrained punchers, however, tend to have a large amount of telegraphing (movements that signal a certain attack).

Against a well trained kicker, be careful – he or she can often change a kick's height or target before putting his or her foot down. On the other hand, remember that taking a foot off the ground means less support – as such, off-balancing an attacker during their kick is (generally) easier. Also, a kick generally takes longer than a punch to reach its destination. You will want to react to the opponent's starting movement as quickly as possible with a jamming technique or combination.

You must maintain a strong cover from which you can counter swiftly, and off-balance your opponent while their kicking foot is still traveling. Try to close in the distance with the kicker, and reduce his or her options. Elbows and knees are particularly effective for striking away kicks. Use caution, however, if your attacker appears trained in a heavily body-conditioning oriented flavor of Muay Thai / Thai boxing, Kyokushin karate, or the like. Counter striking to vital areas that cannot be conditioned (solar plexus and so forth) will be

Strategy continued

even more important in these cases.

Many fights end up hitting the ground. Even if you are comfortable working from the ground, you must try to get a dominant position as soon as possible. There are many potential dangers in ground fighting on the street - more attackers arriving, glass on the ground, weapons, and your most immediate attacker being much heavier, and so forth. A grappler will have methods of closing the fighting distance with you, and taking you out of the range from which many types of strikes can be thrown solidly. In this case, use standing submissions, reversals, makeshift weapons, and/or muay Thai style clinching (using elbows and knees as well). Do not over-extend your strikes, or leave them extended for long after delivery, against a seasoned grappler.

When faced with an attacker who you suspect has a weapon, you will, of course, have even more reason to seek means of escaping the situation other than hand to hand combat. It is possible that if you comply with your attacker, they will leave you alone afterward. However, do not always be quick to believe that he or she shares your belief system; they could very well harm or even kill you after getting what he / she wanted.

The attacker may also be on drugs such as PCP, which would make him or her very dangerous to deal with. Pain compliance may not work as well against such an assailant. Use the environment, such as getting free to run and throwing things in his or her path. If at close range, try to stop any weapon from even being drawn. If this is not possible, dodge an attack or jam it as your opponent comes at you. Control the wielding arm, and strike at your opponent with your free limbs, head butts, etc. until you can disarm or subdue. If you get caught off guard with a handgun, use distraction or other methods to defuse the situation, and disarm if necessary.

Overall, there is no way anyone can plan ahead for all situations. However, one should constantly learn, as well as use strategy, adaptability, and heart to one's advantage. In life, stay truthful to yourself and loved ones. Be honorable as possible in every situation - your enemy today may become your ally tomorrow. Also remember that what protects and upholds you today may hinder you tomorrow. Watch carefully, ask questions, and never stop learning.

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Peace, Harmony, and Truth

Practice the Way of the Empty Hand to become as an empty vessel. This is so that you may take natural courses of action, like water, that you may find the path of least resistance. This is in order to better understand and utilize your nature, as it relates to the universe, and universal truth.

Practice the Way of Peace and Harmony in every way possible. Strength of mind, body, and soul is a tool for peace and harmony. Peace and harmony give strength meaning.

Life, like the ocean, is an ebb and tide, a give and take. Learn to subside and crash upon the shores of life. Study, recover, train, become...Then give it all back. This all relates to not just combat, but life itself.

Like the ecosystem, people all depend on each other. Do not hesitate to plant a good seed. Though 'an eye for an eye' makes the world blind, a favor for a favor makes the world a garden.

In your search for peace, harmony, and truth, strip away the unessential. Make leaps of faith; give it all your best effort. Do not ever hesitate, or stop learning. Reach to the bottom of the lake of your soul. I wish you the best, and God bless you.

On Teaching

'True karate-do is this; that in daily life one's mind and body be trained and developed in a spirit of humility; and that in critical times, one be devoted utterly to the cause of justice.' - Gichin Funakoshi, Karate-do Kyohan

The major concern in teaching martial arts is helping others. While it is not wrong to make a living from teaching, prestige is nothing without setting a good example. We can not have desirable progress in the 'martial ways' or peace and happiness without mutual respect.

To ensure continued progress in the effectiveness of philosophy and technique of our own arts, we must study our arts diligently while being open to other perspectives. Teachers must set an example for students by also being model students. This level of modesty can take years to cultivate, and is one of the ultimate goals of our training. Also, before we can realize our full potential in teaching others, we must honestly learn our own strengths and weaknesses. Let us look at ourselves in the mirrors of truth and good standards, while chasing the rainbow of perfection.

'The technique of the martial arts is like the universe - there is no limit to knowledge. One must realize no limit to one's performance.' - Hironori Ohtsuka

Most of all, we should be respectful and modest. We must remember to have and give respect as least as much as we get it. It is easy to lose modesty under a pile of well-practiced technique. Yet, without modesty, one has gained nothing from training. We learn the realities of fighting so as to know how to avoid fighting and take the most honorable approach. There are no winners in war - only losers. With this in mind, we must punch and kick not to win or lose, but to learn from each other in martial brotherhood.

'Have no regard for the martial aspects when training, but rather adhere to the way of peace.' - Hironori Ohtsuka

Walking the Path

'From one thing, know ten thousand things.' - Musashi, Go Rin no Sho (Book of Five Rings)

It is hard to describe the true experience of kata ('set forms' / 'formal movements' in various Japanese arts) with words, in the way it is hard to describe a symphony with sheet music alone. Similarly, it is difficult to understand the true way of karate after having practiced kata only a few times. Life is in the living - swimming is in the water - karate is in the empty hand. Karate is not in the clenched fist, but in the open mind and tempered spirit. This is the true path of budo.

Much practice and study of technique are required for its digestion and understanding. In this way we slowly come to view the true path. While we may begin with 'a way', a style of technique, this gives us the foundation to find 'the way'. What we call our style is simply a symbol for what we practice and absorb, and should not be confused with the true way. However, practicing a well-taught style may teach us many things. In diligent, proper training, we find the flexibility and focus of not just our bodies, but also our minds. A tempered spirit is a tool that solves according to internal principle, and guides technique. In light of this, listed below are a few general factors that we should train in ourselves, for others, along the martial path.

Power and endurance: Explosive strength is a must in the performance of athletic skill. Ways to develop power include (but are not necessarily limited to) plyometrics, body weight exercises (with or without partners), cardiovascular training, and stance training. One must also have mental fortitude to press on past the comfort zone. Spiritual development occurs as a natural result. Every day provides fresh lessons.

Rhythm, timing, distance: Fighting and music have often been compared to one another. If you understand rhythm, you will know how to break your own - and find your opponent's. Timing, then, is a necessary consideration in employing the use of rhythm and broken rhythm. To develop rhythm, we may start with kata, then understand bunkai (application of kata), and then learn how to adapt naturally. In this way, one may control the distance between oneself and one's opponent - both physically and mentally. Many different sparring drills may be employed. The serious study of rhythm and timing may provide many lessons on understanding the ebb and tide of life's many seasons.

Awareness and adaptability: While we by nature depend highly on vision, we may train ourselves to more fully use our senses. Knowledge is nothing without being mentally aware of its application, or the spiritual flexibility to adapt to change in a positive fashion. Let us train diligently so that we may do our best, and be prepared for the worst.

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Walking the Path continued

In this way, we can see that disciplining our bodies develops our mental clarity. In cutting away the inessential, we develop our mental focus and begin to see the true path. Thus, we make progress in our spiritual perception. In this way, we will take a positive direction spiritually and morally, as we have already done mentally and physically. Thus, we will make a positive effect on the world around us.

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In Pursuit of Perfection, part I

In this series of articles, I set out an outline of the philosophy, techniques, principles, and physical conditioning of Mizuumi ryu, the style founded and taught by Johnston Karate. Mizuumi ryu is based on Heiwado Karate (the style of Japan International Karate Center) and Boxing, with influences from grappling arts. Mizuumi ryu is dedicated to the development of body, mind, and spirit. Visit our class page to view locations where the style is taught and other news - <http://johnstonkarateclasses.com/>

In the pursuit of perfection of character - the ultimate aim of karate-do - one learns a new mode of self-expression. In this way, verbal and body language take on new forms and meanings. As a result, we may better effect positive changes within - and without - ourselves, as well as more honestly and clearly express our inner hopes and desires.

In this light, let us remember that life is a give and take. In all fairness, we must treat others as we would like to be treated. In this way, we may try to find the universal good and absolute morality. Overall, we must seek the best possible solution in every situation. Studies of ancient wisdom, and hard - yet efficient - training, will provide the answers.

What is invisible must become visible. What is visible must become invisible. The rhythms, seasons, and cycles of life and nature are easily observed, but are hard to understand without much study. To improve our own nature is even more difficult. Yet, let us look at acorns. Depending on factors in the environment surrounding it, the small acorn disappears in the ground and grows into a grand oak tree. In time, this oak produces acorns of its own. Let us always remember that our only strength is the truth, for it will always stand. Let us continue to seek the true path.

Remember these factors for external strength - power, speed, technique, agility, balance, control, endurance. Remember these factors for internal strength - love, hope, faith, discipline, looseness, determination, fighting spirit. Many subtleties and shades are contained within! The factors for internal strength take time to foster, but are infinitely more important. Difficult external training, and the wisdom of others will strengthen you on the inside - but only as long as you want to learn. Also, adversities in life develop one's mental and spiritual depth.

Massive strength and extraneous movements should not be necessary in technique or application. Rather, we should consider power - smooth, explosive movement. Much practice and training are required to gain the proper efficiency. Yet, unlike raw strength, there is virtually no limit to skill development. Remember this in your physical, mental, and spiritual training.

In Pursuit of Perfection, Part II

Many martial arts use forms to help teach not only the technique systems, but the qualities and types of power that I put forth in the previous article. Proper rhythms - and broken rhythm - must be understood. This is not simply for fighting, but also for life.

As such, let us look at 'Nekoashido' or, 'Way of the Cat's Foot', which is essentially Mizuumi ryu's 'cat style' sub-system. It contains a set of technical drills intended to help students develop cat-like agility, economy of movement, and skill in as many techniques as possible. The drills help train the following: bunkai (applications) and kaisetsu (principles), footwork, evasion, efficient counter-attacking, standup grappling / clinchwork, and breakfalls.

The general goal is to unify many techniques and methods into one structure, which is loose, agile, and cat-like. The following qualities are very important: efficiency, flexibility, power (including strain energy, falling energy, momentum, explosive power, and short power), springy evasive movement, trapping hands and feet, as well as simultaneous attack and defense.

Shuffling

This is a set of drills which will help develop speed, efficiency, timing, softness, and rhythm in footwork.

Side and straight line shuffles. First, shuffle side to side, slowly then quickly. Practice this with left or right leg in front, then switch and practice again. The three types of side shuffles - side, behind, across. Next, shuffle forward and backward, shooting out punches as you do so.

Also try performing kicks as part of shuffle practice. One drill is to perform two small hops in which you switch feet, then perform kick of choice with the back leg. Before setting the foot down, pivot to the opposite side of the kick and perform a full turn in that direction. (If you kicked with the right foot, then turn to the left.) As you are planting your feet, shoot forward with a jab with the lead hand.

Pivot shuffles. Best done with a partner. Step forward along the line of his or her attack, then pivot the back leg behind the front leg, using a hip motion. If your partner is using a straight punch, use a parrying strike while trapping his or her lead hand or arm (to set up for grappling and/or further strikes). If your partner is kicking, use the motion to begin a takedown.

Circular shuffles. Shuffle around your practice area, switching your balance. Stay mostly on the balls of your feet, for lightness of foot. Then, use sliding circular shuffles - with feet more planted - for solid, but light steps. In this way, you practice for real fighting, where you need not only agility, but power and stability.

In Pursuit of Perfection, Part II continued

Parry shuffles. Coordinate both hands and both feet in simultaneous movement, attack, and defense. Blocking isn't always necessary - better not to be in the way of the attack!

Smashing / Lunging

The basic technique is to perform a brushing block with the lead hand as your back foot steps across to set up for a step-across karate reverse punch. As you improve, add a deeper lunge to the punch, then explode with a kick. Then set the kicking leg forward and perform another lunging punch with the other side. This sets up for very explosive movements.

Next, drill a continuous straight blast. Concentrate on controlling and/or jamming the opponent's movement. This straight blast may be used to back your opponent into an obstruction. If the opponent moves off the line of attack, quickly transition into the next technique.

Once you have improved with these, add techniques that require both forward movement and circular pivoting for full power, such as elbows, roundhouse kicks, and hooks. Concentrate on boxing in the opponent and making him or her panic, or change tactics. Next, add pulling / clinching / controlling techniques. Lastly, fast, well-timed, evasive attack along your opponent's line of attack should be drilled. Utilize techniques for parrying and bridging the gap while simultaneously attacking. Quickly transition to off-balancing / sweeping / groundwork techniques.

"Pushing Hands" / Standup grappling and clinching

The key is to push with the hands and pull with the feet. Leverage and positioning are key. Firstly, review standing armbar submissions and wrist locks, then move into clinchwork. The key is to control the opponent's momentum, so that you may effect an unbalancing technique.

If the opponent resists a standing armbar, use your control of his or her arm off-balance them in a different direction, setting up for a standing wrist / arm lock or similar technique, and a takedown. However, if the opponent reacts to your "pushing hands" by trying to pull you back, push in and effect a blood choke or similar submission technique. This is just one example. Also, as needed, use strikes, clinch work, and seizing or pain compliance techniques (aim for joints, vital points, and muscles). Lastly, takedowns, throws, and sweeps allow easy transitions to various ground submissions.

In the case of multiple opponents, you may throw one into another, or use an opponent as a shield. Of course, these are just the basics. Keep training and studying to find what works for you.

In Pursuit of Perfection, Part II continued

Switching

The goal of switching is to use clever strategy to throw your opponent off his or her rhythm / pattern. The basic technique is to quickly move forward with the lead foot while performing a fast technique the lead hand. As you step, pivot the back leg around and 'dip' it past the front leg, using a quick twist of the hips. This looks like a shortened step-forward-and-pivot body shift. This is essentially a 'step-behind' with the rear leg instead of a 'step-across', and this kind of switching step is commonly used to set up side kicks.

The dip of the back leg may be large or small, but it must be fast and performed immediately after the first technique. The dip sets up for a side kick with the front leg. After the kick, retract the leg, come back to a front stance, and perform a roundhouse kick with the back leg. Retract that leg to a front stance (pulling it back or setting it forward), then perform a front kick with the other leg. Of course, one may change the techniques, but the idea is to trick your opponent, "box" him or her in, and limit their movement.

One may also vary the switch, of course, to pivot and turn at various angles. This may be used as a variation of "Pivot shuffles". The idea is quickly shutting down your opponent's movement with tricky footwork. One could add in continuous strikes. Next, drill a turning step. As with the basic switch, move in with the lead foot and hand, then pivot the back leg. However, after this, follow-up with pivoting the body completely around. One should land in a stance with the same leg in front as before. Perform techniques while using this footwork. Lastly, vary your angles of movement while practicing such steps. Try it with a partner - you will try to throw each other off-guard.

Sinking step

Move away or along the line of attack using a deep, lunging style of angular footwork, while pivoting the upper body to evade a straight line punch. The hands should remain up, ready to parry. The legs should remain loose but stable, so that you can move quickly to the next position. A roundhouse kick or hook may be used together with a sinking step. A sinking step also sets up for a quick counter. Sinking steps may also assist in performing jumping kicks. However, such kicks are only used here to assist speed and power training.

In a real self defense scenario, one could 'sinking step' away from or under a punch while using a brush block to off balance the opponent, while throwing a roundhouse kick as the step is completed. A sinking step may also setup for pivoting into the opponent and performing a fast combination.

Wedging in. Sink backwards with brush blocks, then sink forward with penetrating sword hand blocks. This is to not only continue the idea of pulling and smashing, but to also add your own momentum, as well as "uprooting" the opponent. The idea is to twist your

In Pursuit of Perfection, Part II continued

opponent and "cut" through their stance – possibly effecting a takedown. This may be modified to setup for various types of takedowns.

Rockfall step. Sink away from an attack into a low stance while parrying / trapping, then fall / wedge in with the lead leg. With a partner, practice using a knife hand block against his or her punch while entering his or her stance with your own side facing cat stance. The goal is to gain control of their center of gravity and knock him or her off balance while using leverage (such as using a trapped arm) and strikes (such as shoulder / elbow / body checks). While maintaining control of your partner, you may pivot away from him or her to create the momentum needed for a takedown, or use leverage to throw the opponent.

Spinning step

This is a quick evasive pivot that sets up for techniques such as throws, back hands, and back kicks. Like the basic switch step, move in with the lead foot and hand, then pivot the back leg. However, follow-up by completing a full turn on the back leg. This back leg turn may be compared to the pivoting often seen in karate kata. This type of step is more of a drill than a direct application. As such, one may adjust it to include techniques such as spinning back kicks, or throwing one opponent and turning with the back leg to face another. As with switch steps, one may vary the spinning step to pivot and turn. Practice pivoting to one side, then the other. Finally, adjust it to include defensive and offensive techniques, as well as various kinds of steps (depending on what you need to practice). Spinning steps may also include practice of throws.

Falling / Breakfalls

This helps practice ground work. Kicks, elbows, takedowns, setups for various submissions, etc. may be practiced in conjunction with the rolls, falls, and position changes. Simply keep moving, attacking, and transitioning. When breaking falls, use both momentum and every part of the body to lessen the impact on any one part.

Back roll. This may be used effectively when falling backwards, and not just straight down (in which case a side fall may be better).

Forward roll. Remember to "check" with the hand that is on the side you are falling to, and "rocket" with the balls of the feet. This will help you roll with the momentum and clear the ground. Do not land flat on your back, but instead bridge over quickly on your shoulder as you keep your head tucked in.

Back control. This includes setting up a guard position and submissions when on one's back. Also, practice changing positions from the ground, especially when it comes to sweeps from the guard.

In Pursuit of Perfection, Part II continued

Forward control. This is when you are engaged in standup grappling. Practice sprawls, guard passes, mounts, ground strikes, submissions.

Side fall. Sometimes you may have to use a side break fall as not to get the wind knocked out of you, or take damage to your back. Remember to loosen up as you fall and use your arm to soften the blow. From here, use one or more kicks as you try to regain position and control. This may be followed with a technical rise, clinch, shoot, leg sweep, and so forth.

In Summary

The ultimate goal is near-constant movement. One must be able to move in any direction with agility. The best defense is a good offense. Press the advantage, cut your opponent short, and jam their attack by sensing their pattern, their rhythm. It would take many pages to break down the body mechanics of techniques, much less describe further application in actual fighting.

Overall

Always engage in well rounded, sober training in the martial ways. Anything less is to shortchange ourselves and all who we come in contact with. We must not be hostile, violent, or proud, but ready to survive, protect, and lead. Do not mistake the truth for an interpretation of the truth. Let us study "a" way for a while to gain an understanding of "the" way - whose goals include perfection of character and dedication to others. This will increase our knowledge of the internal factors, which we may call wisdom. Both our external and internal strength should be used to carry ourselves with a positive attitude through life. The mind and body are incredibly adaptable. The soul is capable of great depth - and great height as well. Lastly, personal progress begins not in action, but choice. Let us decide within ourselves to follow our goals and dreams.

In Pursuit of Perfection, part III

Let us diligently train the external factors. This will help us develop power - not just physical power, but strength that may help us walk the path of truth. Let our inner hopes, then, shine through.

Nonetheless, I will detail a few ideas for external training. The following exercises and routines are not meant to be a comprehensive list. Feel free to adjust the exercises and routines below to suit personal goals & concerns. Also, one may instead use the Pavel's Ladder method and/or a push/pull routine for one's exercises of choice.

<http://goo.gl/EOkLHA>

<http://goo.gl/jpDWAH>

Warmup routine:

- 5 minutes of stretching
- 3 minute round of skipping rope
- 1 minute of pushups
- 3 minute round of skipping rope
- 1 minute of crunches
- 3 minute round of skipping rope
- 1 minute of squats
- Take a water break

High intensity interval training routine The idea is to supercharge your running routine by sprinting, then jogging, then sprinting, and so forth. Highly useful in losing excess fat (and therefore toning up) as well as building your overall cardio. Also, in any form of fighting, one needs both long term endurance and quick bursts. No matter how tired one gets, one should always have that one last burst.

One way to start H.I.I.T. is to begin with a four minute cycle. Sprint for 30 seconds, and then jog for 30 seconds, four times. Each week, one may add a sprint and a jog to the routine. Work up to doing 15 minutes or more of H.I.I.T.

This routine may be done every day that you are working out. However, it is recommended to have a nutritious, high-protein drink and "power snack" (such as a fruit or granola bar) after H.I.I.T. Also, after doing H.I.I.T., rest at least two hours before heavy weight lifting. On other workout days, rest at least half an hour before beginning another routine. However, be sure to consult your own age and health, as well as a local fitness instructor, to help design a well-rounded plan.

In Pursuit of Perfection, part III continued**Martial arts routine:**

Depending on your goals, you may use personalized variations of this routine at least twice per week. Add or subtract rounds as necessary, and always take a 1 minute break between rounds. Don't forget cooldown periods, as well as water breaks to stay hydrated, and plan ahead for proper recovery time and nutrition. If you also need to build strength, ask your coach or fitness instructor about programming a strength training / aerobics split. Visit this page for an example -

<http://goo.gl/sKZdkr>

Three 3 minute rounds of shadow boxing.

Three 3 minute rounds of heavy bag work.

Three 3 minute rounds of speed bag.

Three 3 minute rounds of partner shadow boxing.

Three 3 minute rounds of partner pad work.

Cooldown period / water break.

If needed – at least one 2 minute round of light boxing with a partner, or at least one 3 to 5 minute round of light sparring using MMA rules, or at least one 5 minute round of grappling with a partner. Use the appropriate equipment. Cooldown periods / water breaks as necessary.

Body weight conditioning exercises ('calisthenics')

Calisthenics may be used to rehabilitate joints or even build strength in them. Calisthenics may also be made progressively harder using leverage, positioning, and range of motion. In this way, calisthenics can be very useful for strength training. Remember that even if you are advanced at calisthenics, it is still a good idea to warm up the joints and muscles with easier exercises. Never train to failure.

Take at least a 1 minute rest between each set. Once you have gained proficiency in an exercise, feel free to move on to the next one. Start working on a new exercise by doing low reps / sets and build gradually over time.

In Pursuit of Perfection, part III continued

Upper Body Calisthenics – a few exercises

Pushups:

Knuckle or regular pushups

Decline pushups

One armed pushups

Pull-ups:

Rowing (aka horizontal pullups or Australian pullups)

Jackknife pullups

Full pullups

Uneven pullups

Abdominal:

Situps

Leg raises

Six inches

Lay your back flat on your exercise area. Your palms should be also flat on the ground, with your legs straight out and knees locked. Slowly raise your feet to 6 inches off the ground. If new to Six inches, keep your feet in this position for intervals of 30 seconds until you have held the position for a total of 2 minutes. Slowly build the intervals until you are able to hold the position for the entire 2 minutes without dropping your feet. Bruce Lee would commonly hold this position for 45 minutes while watching a television program!

Calisthenics for the Legs

Full squats

Squat kicks - squat as low as you possibly can, and as you come back up, perform a front snap kick. Alternate legs with each repetition.

One legged squats – Use a door or wall to assist balance. However, one should try to maintain balance during this exercise without relying too much on objects. To perform this exercise, one may place one leg in front of or behind the body (depending on what one feels more comfortable with) and squat with the other leg.

Horse stance training - sit deep in a very wide horse stance. To add difficulty, one may practice strikes, perform calf raises in this stance, and/or add two dumbbells (which may be balanced on the upper thighs, which should be perpendicular to the floor). Without weights,

In Pursuit of Perfection, part III continued

try to hold the horse for at least several minutes. With weights, try at least two minutes total (even if one has to do this exercise for one minute, rest, then go for the second minute).

Bear crawls - get on hands and feet, with the body close to the floor (knees and elbows should be bent). Move forward swiftly while staying low. Choose an area (20 to 50 feet) to bear crawl across. Grass and matted floors are preferable. Bear crawling the length of it, and back, is a lap. Build up to 3 laps.

Bunny hops - completely bend at the knees while keeping your back straight, and your hands up. Jump forward explosively from the ground. Tuck your feet back in as you jump, and land lightly. The goal is to perform bunny hops in quick succession. Grass and matted floors are preferable. However, if using sidewalks to bunny hop, use excellent running shoes and a bit of caution. Do at least 10 bunny hops. Eventually build up to bunny hopping the length of your choosing. Masahiko Kimura, the legendary Judo player, once bunny hopped a kilometer!

Duck walk - start in bunny hop position, but instead move one foot in front of the other without coming up at all. The goal is to move swiftly without dragging one's feet, or losing balance. Do 3 laps of duck walking on grass or a matted area or until failure. One may also use a sidewalk to duck walk, but remember to take the same precautions.

Exercises with weights

Remember to build gradually when using weights. Don't try to add too much weight each week! With diligence, strength gains will come. The same is true with the other exercises.

Dumbbell exercises - upper body

Start with light weights if needed. Exhale sharply when performing a repetition, and to inhale deeply in-between repetitions (or reps, for short). This routine should be performed 3 times a week, on the same days as heavy weight training with a weight bar.

Rows - these work arms and back. Best with two dumbbells, which should be placed beside one another, and within arm's reach on the floor in front of you. A.) Start with your feet shoulder width apart, then lean forward and stretch down your right arm and grab the right dumbbell. Use your left hand and leg for support if needed. B.) Then, pull the right dumbbell up as you bend your arm back to waist level, and carefully lower the dumbbell back to the floor. This should be done quickly. C.) From there, grab the left dumbbell and perform the same exercise. Build up to 2 sets of 20.

Weighted shoulder shrugs - perform at least one set of 10 each.

Dumbbell curls - best done sitting, so as to enforce proper technique.

Dumbbell flies - lay flat on your back on a weight bench, with your feet planted on the

In Pursuit of Perfection, part III continued

floor. The dumbbells should be placed within arm's reach, one beside each arm. Grasp both dumbbells from under - palms facing up. Instead of a curl-like motion, keep the elbows mostly locked, and squeeze your arms close enough together that the dumbbells touch. Build up to at least 2 sets of 10.

Dumbbell exercises – legs

Start with light weights if needed. Remember proper breathing during reps.

Weighted calf raises and squats - at least one set of 10 each.

Weighted one legged squats - at least one set of 10 per side.

Weighted horse stance - at least one minute in deep horse stance with a dumbbells resting on each thigh, placed near the hip. Hold the dumbbells in place with your hands as necessary. Build up to using heavier dumbbells and longer intervals.

Weight bar exercises

After a hard workout, remember to give your body enough time to recuperate. Remember to maintain a healthy, nutritious diet with sufficient protein.

Power cleans - start with light weight on the bar at first to practice the technique. The bar should be a few inches in front of your toes. Bend your knees slightly, and bend over to grasp the bar, with palms facing the floor. Your hands should be outside of your knees. Jump with an exploding movement as you jerk the weight upwards. As you do this, allow your elbows to bend in front of the body and the hands to come to shoulder level. Also, the knees should bend deeply as you land. Basically, you will be landing under the weight.

Weighted jumping jacks - With palms facing down, pick up the bar and raise it to chest level, and bend deeply at the knees (it should look as if you just performed a power clean). Jump your feet outwards widely while quickly pressing the weight over the head. Then jump the feet back in as you bring the bar back to chest level. That is one repetition. Put enough weight on the bar that you will be able to perform 8 to 10 reps.

Military presses - With palms facing down, pick up the bar and lift it above your head. Lower the bar so as to let it almost completely rest on neck and shoulders. Slowly press the bar upwards above the head. That is one repetition. Perform at least one set of 10.

Dead lifts - At least one set of 10.

Bench presses – Always take at least a one minute rest between sets. Depending on your goals, vary the load, reps, and sets as needed. Because of the variety of goals (the specific sports training, for instance) and personal situations (health factors, scheduling, etc.), I can't

In Pursuit of Perfection, part III continued

advocate a single approach to bench press training.

I have been actively developing my approach to progressive calisthenics for strength. Calisthenics are a great way to build functional strength, and do not require equipment. Check out my article on this approach in this edition of the book.

Of course, no one routine fits all. Everyone is different, has different needs, experience, and so on. Also, if you find the right approach for your personal lifestyle, you will be able to be your own coach and construct your own routines. That being said, I do highly recommend visiting a local certified fitness trainer, and relying upon his or her professional expertise. Your trainer will be able to assist in getting a health assessment, and then start your on your guided discovery. This way, he or she will be able to help you determine your fitness goals, as well as the best methods to reach those goals.

To get a headstart on learning more about fitness instruction, read about the Seven "Granddaddy" Laws of training. The article was written by "Dr. Squat", who co-founded ISSA / International Sports Sciences Association. These 7 scientifically sound principles will help you decide upon which routine or routines will work best for you, and modify your own routine as needed. With time, experience, and sound instruction from a fitness professional, you should be able to figure out the best approach for your personal lifestyle.

<http://goo.gl/xt5g87>

Also, don't forget to read through some articles written by ISSA certified fitness trainers.

<http://www.bodybuildingpro.com/issa.html>

"Strength comes from health, speed comes from efforts, technique comes from experience, will power comes from faith, serenity comes from old knowledge, progress comes from new knowledge - today is now!" - Peter Urban, founder of American Goju-ryu Karate

Outline of the Mizuumi ryu Karate approach

Mizuumi ryu Karate is dedicated to the development of body, mind, and spirit, in a holistic manner. The primary physical goals of Mizuumi are to teach students traditional martial arts, practical self defense skills, good health habits, and progressive calisthenics techniques for training the body as one holistic, functional unit. Mizuumi emphasizes a well rounded approach that teaches the body mechanics behind martial arts and exercise techniques. 'Nekoashido' – or, 'Way of the Cat's Foot' – is Mizuumi ryu's 'cat style' sub-system. It contains a set of technical drills intended to help students develop cat-like agility, economy of movement, and skill in as many techniques as possible.

Mizuumi ryu Karate aims to train students mentally through the discipline required to obtain proficiency in martial arts and advanced exercise techniques. The Mizuumi ryu curriculum also heavily encourages students to engage in ongoing personal research to further expand the mind, as well as learn 'self coaching skills'. This way, students learn not only how to train the body, but also the mind.

Mizuumi ryu Karate also aims to help each student spiritually. As students learn the dedication and discipline required to become better martial artists, they also learn how to make lifestyle changes that are beneficial to training. This includes proper rest and nutrition, stretching, meditation, good mental habits, and learning or developing loving-kindness. As students progress in their training, they learn how to become better partners for their fellow students, instead of practicing competitively. Students are taught to put their partners' benefit above their own. The primary spiritual goals of Mizuumi ryu are having compassion, resolving violence with loving-kindness and without harm, and living in harmony with others.

Ultimately, with the above goals in mind, the ideal of the Mizuumi ryu style is to dedicate oneself every day to become the best possible in every situation. This is not just for martial arts training, but also for every area of life. We should actively seek out the best, most natural solution for all parties involved – while actively seeking to never use force or conflict.

Mizuumi itself is the Japanese word for 'lake' – which I chose to be a metaphor for taking the path of least resistance, and flowing naturally, like water. The goal is to take the shape of the situation, like water taking the shape of its container – and ultimately be as calm and natural as a lake, no matter the situation.

This positive outlook, in sparring drills, relates to not trying to use brute force but taking the path of least resistance. This especially utilizes the principle of 'irimi' – blending in. Both partners should be seeking not to hurt one another, but help one another to become better at their techniques.

Outline of Mizuumi ryu Karate continued

This kind of training indeed translates very well to the outside world, where partnership and compassion are valued more than simply looking out for one's own needs. Mizuumi ryu is dedicated to 'Wa no Michi', or, the way of peace. We should seek unity, harmony, and peace within ourselves and the world around us.

This all points back to the goal of Mizuumi ryu Karate, which is to train the entire person in a holistic manner, in such a way that he or she will be able to move and think freely in accordance with nature. I will now go into more detail on each aspect of the system and how it aims to help students. Mizuumi ryu primarily emphasizes principles of self defense, strict etiquette, moral precepts, natural exercise movements, and technical efficiency.

Ultimately, Mizuumi ryu aims to train each student to free the mind and body of all self-imposed restraints and try to become the best person he or she can possibly be. Physically, the goal is to become fast, cat-like, and unpredictable. One should be able to move freely in any direction, and be adaptable to any situation.

To meet this goal, the body is trained through hard work in basic exercise techniques such that the body will be taught how to move more freely. As one progresses in this training, the exercises should be modified to fit one's own body type and style of movement. Eventually, the exercise techniques will start to resemble martial arts techniques. This has the aim of directly training the body to achieve high levels of skill in athletic motions that directly relate to martial arts.

This daily application of hard work helps the martial artist to also train his or her mind through correct discipline. Eventually, the goal is to gain not only a high level of discipline, but also a deep understanding of body mechanics. Of course, martial arts techniques should be practiced during the same session as the exercises so that one may compare them to one another and further understand the body mechanics.

With all of the knowledge and discipline gained from this kind of training, the martial artist should be able to also start learning a much deeper understanding of the application of the principles behind his or her martial arts techniques. This is the time when partner drills have the most value. Of course, these are performed slowly at first to help each partner recognize the techniques being thrown at them, as well as help them learn how to react naturally according to the principles of movement they have learned.

In the Mizuumi ryu Karate approach, attacking techniques are generalized into different styles of movement. The reasoning behind this is that if we try to think of a specific counter to each and every kind of attack, and train in such a way, it will be potentially fatal in

Outline of Mizuumi ryu Karate continued

actual self defense. Basically, in a self defense situation, if we mentally 'lock up' and hesitate while trying to figure out which technique is appropriate, it gives the attacker a much higher chance for injuring or killing us. With this in mind, it is better to learn the principles of movement and how to recognize styles of attack, such that one can learn how to adapt to the situation. This points to the concept of 'zanshin', or a relaxed awareness.

This all goes back to being natural. One must be able to recognize the important details quickly and react as efficiently as possible in a self defense situation. Economy of motion is the most important thing – no wasted movements or clutter.

The general learning curve intended is for body mechanics, mental discipline, and ethical precepts to be practiced in the first phases of training. After such training, application of principles, mental focus, and personal development may be assisted.

When it comes to body mechanics and general movement, Mizuumi ryu begins with the concept of being able to move as freely and naturally as a cat. With this in mind, the primary emphasis in physical training is on body weight training progressions that teach strength, skill, balance, coordination, agility, and flexibility. Each exercise is treated as if it is a martial arts technique that is to be practiced repetitively as a skill. In this way, athleticism, a high strength-to-weight ratio, 'springiness', and economy of motion are highly trained. Using cats as an example of natural agility follows the example of many styles of Chinese martial arts that have traditionally studied the animal kingdom.

As far as martial arts techniques, the Mizuumi ryu style does not reinvent the wheel, nor is it an 'anything goes' type of system that has no core or unifying principles. The nucleus of the system is primarily formed by Heiwado karate and Boxing. The general structure of each of these is maintained, but with a focus on making each and every motion as efficient as possible, as well as on cutting out any redundancy in the overall system.

In practice, one example of this is not treating karate and boxing punches as being completely different, but simply using different body mechanics to achieve power in similar styles of punching. This kind of focus streamlines the curriculum, and helps each student to easily categorize and internalize the techniques. In this way, clutter is reduced and functionality is increased. Ultimately, if one does not think 'I will use a boxing jab' or 'I will use a karate straight lead punch', but simply 'I am punching', this means one has begun to gain the natural type of skill in motion that the Mizuumi system aims for.

Outline of Mizuumi ryu Karate continued

The kata are still held in high regard for the lessons they teach on rhythm, power generation, posture training, transitions, and how to perform techniques in natural combinations. Each kata is treated as a system of techniques that can be categorized, rather than simply a collection of techniques that is to be memorized. This goes back to understanding the body mechanics and styles of motion. When we look very deeply at kata, we find quite often that they do not simply have many different types of techniques, but many different ways to interpret common types of techniques.

With this in mind, Mizuumi ryu Karate treats each kata on the curriculum as a part of a 'family of techniques and applications'. Principles of self defense and body mechanics can be gleaned and generalized from the kata with this perspective. As each kata and its techniques, principles, and body mechanics are learned, applications are drilled with partners. As skill, knowledge, and physical conditioning improve, one may reinterpret movements from kata according to one's natural style. As the martial artist learns these deeper lessons from kata, his or her natural style can develop. Ultimately, he or she can move away from the kata into his or her own streamlined approach to technique.

The goal is to internalize techniques and styles of movement, in such a way that one may become more natural. Not only are one's physical movements made more natural, but the mind is also trained, by becoming a student of kata. As one cuts away at clutter in movement, and comes to a deeper understanding of the common principles and styles of movement in one's various kata, mental discipline and focus are also improved.

This is all important because it prepares students of Mizuumi ryu Karate to gain more skill in Mizuumi ryu's 'Nekoashido' set of technical drills. Mizuumi heavily focuses on these drills in order to develop cat-like agility and reflexes, as well as natural, streamlined movement that can be adapted to any situation. Fanciful, overly mechanical applications are heavily discouraged. Flowing, natural movement is emphasized. Keep in mind the metaphor of the lake, or water – peaceful movement that is in accordance with nature. The situation at hand must dictate the movement needed. In turn, the techniques must spring naturally from putting the body in motion. Of course, in all of this, the mind must be sharp and disciplined, kept still and clear. Mentally, we must be like a cat - open, flexible, and ready to spring. The goal is to adapt to the situation and take the initiative as soon as possible.

Over time, as the student of Mizuumi develops, he or she will hopefully become a better partner, helping each and every fellow student become the best that he or she possibly can. In this way, not only does he or she learn how to defend themselves, but also how to become a better person on and off the training floor. This dedication to our fellow students goes back to one of the spiritual goals of Mizuumi - living harmoniously with others.

Outline of Mizuumi ryu Karate continued

Ultimately, no matter which situation we find ourselves in, let us remember the primary, and spiritual, goal of the Mizuumi ryu Karate. We must learn how to deal with violence and aggression, but must work to not react violently, but compassionately. Even if we must use techniques to defend ourselves or someone else, we must make every effort to do the least amount of harm possible. Also, not just in training - but in life - we must develop active compassion and the perfection of character through daily mindfulness and discipline. This kind of daily effort helps to train the mind and focus the spirit to a great degree. As such, 'kiai' has not only a physical interpretation – as a combat yell – but also exists within as the type of 'focused spirit' that the word implies.

The basic philosophy, 'Nekoashido' set of technical drills, and the approach to physical conditioning in the Mizuumi ryu style of karate are outlined in the previous series of articles 'In Pursuit of Perfection'. Be sure to also review the rest of this book for more details on the general principles of movement and self defense, techniques, partner drills, and kata that form the Mizuumi ryu Karate syllabus, which is outlined in a previous article.

Don't forget to check out the Mizuumi ryu Karate main page for the latest news about the style, including locations where it is taught.

<http://mizuumiryukarate.com>

Lastly, be sure to read the story 'Neko no Myojutsu' / 'Mysterious Technique of the Cat'. It was written by Issai Chozanshi in 1727. The story primarily deals with the 3 levels of attainment in skill.

www.scribd.com/doc/61856047/Neko-No-Myojutsu

Outline of the basic structure and principles of the Mizuumi ryu system

Mizuumi ryu Karate is a hybrid style dedicated to the development of body, mind, and spirit. The nucleus of the style is formed by Heiwado Karate (the style founded by Japan International Karate Center) and Boxing, with influences from grappling arts. The goal is not to promote it as any kind of "best" or superlative style, but simply as my own unique approach to existing traditional martial arts. The major goals are to help students improve their self defense skills, develop confidence and discipline, and boost their fitness and health. We basically try to help all of our students become better people overall, and believe that helping the community in selfless love is the best of all.

The primary physical goals of Mizuumi are to teach students traditional martial arts, practical self defense skills, good health habits, and progressive calisthenics techniques for training the body as one holistic, functional unit. Mizuumi emphasizes a well rounded approach that teaches the body mechanics behind martial arts and exercise techniques. 'Nekoashido' – or, 'Way of the Cat's Foot' – is Mizuumi ryu's 'cat style' sub-system. It contains a set of technical drills intended to help students develop cat-like agility, economy of movement, and skill in as many techniques as possible.

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Mizuumi ryu Karate also aims to help each student spiritually. As students learn the dedication and discipline required to become better martial artists, they also learn how to make lifestyle changes that are beneficial to training. This includes proper rest and nutrition, stretching, meditation, good mental habits, and learning or developing loving-kindness. As students progress in their training, they learn how to become better partners for their fellow students, instead of practicing competitively. Students are taught to put their partners' benefit above their own. The primary spiritual goals of Mizuumi ryu are having compassion, resolving violence with loving-kindness and without harm, and living in harmony with others.

Ultimately, with the above goals in mind, the ideal of the Mizuumi ryu style is to dedicate oneself every day to become the best possible in every situation. This is not just for martial arts training, but also for every area of life. We should actively seek out the best, most natural solution for all parties involved – while actively seeking to never use force or conflict.

[UnderstandingKarate.com](http://www.understandingkarate.com)

Outline of the Mizuumi ryu system continued

The articles mentioned below detail the essential concepts, techniques, drills, etc. of Mizuumi. To view the articles, visit the Johnston Karate home page and click “Karate Articles”.

<http://www.johnstonkarate.com>

All of the articles are included in Understanding Karate and the Johnston Karate Guide to Functional Strength. Visit their respective sites below:

<http://understandingkarate.com>

<http://strengthguidepdf.com>

“In Pursuit of Perfection” series of articles – describes the basic philosophy and conditioning, as well as the 'Nekoashido' sub-system.

Outline of the Mizuumi ryu Karate Approach – concisely details the Mizuumi approach to martial arts, life, and training.

Nekoashido in terms of the elements – describes various “attitudes”.

Kata article – basic bunkai (application) and principles for the kata on the Mizuumi syllabus

Progressive calisthenics – used to build coordination, strength, overall athleticism, and mental toughness. Various articles are available.

Techniques and drills – detailed in “Basic Techniques and Drills” and “One Step Sparring – Karate Drills”.

Principles of movement – detailed in “Karate Principles for Self Defense”

Syllabus – details the progression of technique, knowledge, conditioning, leadership, and character development required of students of Mizuumi.

Other qualities and concepts taught as part of Mizuumi:

Perseverance, collaboration, community, good sportsmanship

Nekoashido - "The Way of the Cat's Foot" - in terms of the elements

Nekoashido is the name of the set of technical training drills of Mizuumi ryu Karate. Nekoashido is essentially the 'cat style' sub-system of Mizuumi ryu, which is the hybrid style of martial arts I created, and still actively develop. View the previous articles for more details on Mizuumi ryu and Nekoashido.

The 'five attitudes' below describe the more abstract concepts of Nekoashido. They can apply not only to combat, but also to freedom of expression in movement, as well as living life. Think carefully about the concepts below as you train and set goals for your own personal development of athletic ability. Skill, grace, and ease in movement are highly valued.

First element - Wind:

Keep moving, ready to change directions and angles at any time. Move through the situation with the right timing and distance. Be light and untouchable, yet move forward with an all-encompassing straight blast. Do not let your opponent know where you're coming from, or where you're going. This is like a cat running, pouncing, climbing, and jumping from many angles.

Second element - Fire:

Burn your way through the situation - not in anger, but with a strong decisiveness. Even the air itself is your fuel. In combat, everything provides you a potential combination. In life, everything provides a way to break free. This is like a cat, full of ferocity, confidence, and sheer aliveness.

Third element - Water:

Keep flowing from one movement to the next. Do not ever stop, yet be still in a relaxed focus. Take the path of least resistance. Allow thought and action to become one – your training should be second nature – like instinct. Your opponent can touch you, but cannot hold. If pulled, push like a tidal wave. If pushed, pulled the opponent into your lake of defense. This is like a cat, who is able to sense disturbance. She is also able to roll and squeeze out of many attacks, with poise, grace, fighting instinct, and incredible flexibility. She fits the shape of the situation, like water.

Fourth element - Earth:

Be strong and solid, yet changeable like clay. Earth is your strength, and foundation for power. This is like a cat stalking her prey. She moves low, in a poised yet calm fashion, looking for the best timing, distance, and angle of attack. She is also

Nekoashido - "The Way of the Cat's Foot" - in terms of the elements continued

ready at any moment to hide under a large rock or upon a high branch. At the same time, she is also always ready to take a solid position on the ground where she may attack and defend with equal ability.

Fifth element - Metal:

A sharpened tool, a harnessed force of nature. Cut to the truth of all you perceive. Understanding and action quickly follow. Even one's own senses are not completely trusted, but rather re-trained to find the clearest path. This is like a cat ready to use her paws to control her prey, as she pierces with claw and teeth. She also uses her sharp claws as tools.

Martial Arts Thoughts

The collected writings in this article are based upon blog posts originally posted at www.johnstonkarate.com.

My top mantra in teaching is to keep technique crisp and compact. It takes thousands upon thousands of repetitions to master this.

Being clever and thinking outside the box are among the most important things to drill after learning the basics of sparring.

One of my favorite karate "traps" is to step in with a jab, follow with a reverse punch fake, and continue with the motion into a step across front kick and a pulling block with the faking hand. The basic idea of setting traps is "show him this, but give him that."

Each of the older traditional kata (forms) could be called its own method of fighting. It isn't unheard of for some teachers to drill one kata and its bunkai for a year or more. Learn kata and learn it thoroughly. Practice sparring drills to understand kata. Move on to light sparring to learn to apply your techniques naturally. Just remember that when you step outside of the dojo / school, you are leaving a controlled environment. You have to be ready for anything.

The traditional forms should be held in high regard. Yet once we have internalized the forms we must then interpret them as needed. We must always consider the importance of traditions and the influence of culture on martial arts. On the other side, we must also remember to apply the lessons learned from traditions so that we may make continued progress. We must learn from those masters who came before us, but also not be a slave to a style of martial arts - we must seek the true way, just as the old masters did.

It is fair to say that reverse punch is the staple move of karate. It is a simple technique, but simple is good. The applications of reverse punch are endless.

Knowing martial arts and how to teach them are related but not quite the same. The latter requires knowledge of how body mechanics work and how to express them clearly.

There is no best martial arts style - no art is complete, and each art has something to offer. I advocate learning a martial art as your core art and later supplementing it with training, principles, and techniques from other styles. We must thoroughly study the underlying principles of our respective arts and how the techniques evolve from those. Let us remember that the journey to mastery is a lifelong one. The journey itself is the goal and its

Martial Arts Thoughts continued

difficulties teach us a lot about becoming better people.

For success in martial arts, we must remember 3 things - basics, conditioning, and discipline. These 3 are equally important and go hand in hand. If we lack basics, we lack a foundation to build upon - and everything else falls apart. Learning the fundamentals thoroughly gives us a solid base to work from, and also helps with both conditioning the body as well as disciplining the mind. If we lack conditioning, then we may lack the stamina to perform basics properly in a drawn out match. If we lack discipline, then we will not be able to focus in a long, hard match, much less be able to thoroughly drill either basics or conditioning. Keep all this in mind as you train - and remember that tomorrow's battle is won during today's training. This is true in both martial arts and life.

Training in martial arts is good life experience. It teaches hard work and goal setting as well as sportsmanship and character. Remember to keep yin and yang in your martial arts practice. There must be gentleness in strength, and power in looseness. Also, when training, challenge yourself, but don't overdo it. On the other side, remember that rest is also part of training.

Also, it is important to train not only your body, but also your mind. Pushing past the point of wanting to give up strengthens both mind and body. Do not neglect the need for developing your inner warrior. To do this one must become acquainted with discomfort and push through life's obstacles, with one's goals constantly in mind. Life itself is the battlefield in which we must fight for our dreams. In martial arts, as in life, it's about getting up after falling down. Trying again. Learning from the life journey is the victory. The spiritual growth found in the fight. Life is tough, but it's a beautiful challenge.

Do not forget, however, that it is important to develop contentedness with our situation, and to love life in general. Nonetheless, we must still work hard towards our dreams and have hope for tomorrow without forgetting to enjoy the moment. Dare to take a stand and claim your dreams. Inspire others. Life is tough, but only you decide when to give up. The thrill of victory is often worth striving for, but it is not the most important thing. The spiritual growth found within the fight itself is the most important.

Factors to Consider

Let us revisit some ideas from a previous article - In Pursuit of Perfection part I - which details what I identify as factors for strength both inside and out.

"Remember these factors for external strength - power, speed, technique, agility, balance, control, endurance. Remember these factors for internal strength - love, hope, faith, discipline, looseness, determination, fighting spirit."

Other teachers and systems may detail more or less factors. Regardless of which factors we agree upon, I believe training should ultimately be difficult and thorough, with an emphasis on realism (self defense), "art" (self expression), and perfection of character (self development). Learning techniques for defense can become tools for violence if placed in the wrong hands. The proper training and coaching will ensure that proper values and discipline are instilled within the student. It is these that will stay with the student hopefully throughout his or her life.

As to the basic factors I list, there are many subtleties. They are all equally important and part of the inseparable whole. For instance, internal looseness alone allows proper power, speed, and so forth in technique. Determination is needed to build physical endurance. Love, hope, faith, and fighting spirit are needed in not only the dojo and self defense but also life in general.

Of course, understanding the factors lead to further refinement of the principles of combat. The thing to remember is that the essence of combat is stillness in motion. This stillness is the singular, calm focus of the mind we have when either practicing kata or sketching a picture on a page. You do not think about the kata or the picture, you simply sketch your movements.

When we investigate this - the art of movement, of expression - we may be reminded of one of many chopstick battles in classic Chinese Kung Fu films, or even Mr. Miyagi's classic fly catching attempts using chopsticks. Even seemingly simple things like these are influenced by the way we incorporate "the martial way" into our lives.

I may sum up the factors into three very basic factors. These factors are physical conditioning, mental discipline, and technical basics. Without rigorous, repetitive, realistic training, we will not develop these three things.

Factors to Consider continued

With solid, well rounded physical conditioning we are able to perform at a high intensity for long intervals in hard sparring. Obviously, if you do not have good conditioning, you are likely to "run out of gas" quickly. When you run out of gas, you're more likely to "lose your head" (your discipline / game plan etc.) in hard sparring, and you'll definitely suffer as far as technique. Of course, discipline is needed to carry out your game plan, and having solid "basics" / basic techniques will ensure this.

Coordination of Mind and Body

Needless to say, taking up martial arts is very rewarding yet also very demanding. I think of it as a journey rather than a goal - the journey is the goal itself. Self defense is important, certainly, and often the major reason why people take up martial arts of any kind. By going through the physical training for self defense, however, we find the necessity of having a focused mind and disciplined body. Acquiring both assists not only self defense, but life in general. To use the mind and body as one - not for violence, but to end it. In that way we might coordinate ourselves with others instead of creating conflict. No good to simply learn techniques and not practice sportsmanlike conduct or etiquette. Let us learn how to work together instead of against one another!

Sparring Tips (Non style specific)

Hands up, knees bent. Eyes forward, looking at the shoulders. Move the head, hands, and feet. Move in fast, move out fast. Work the jab. Lateral movement to trap the opponent. The feint must penetrate, and convince the opponent, and the true attack must follow quickly. Find the opponent's rhythm, follow it, then steal the pace and press the advantage. Slip the jab. Bob and weave. Tight guard, compact technique. Attack by combination. Attack by drawing.

Relax - be yourself - thought and action must become one. Use your peripheral vision and stay balanced. Utilize offense and defense as one. Be aggressive, find your partner's rhythm, and create openings with good timing and distance. Steal the pace and keep it.

Remember the 3 timings for counter attack.

1. Defend the attack (block and/or dodge), then counter.
2. Defend and counter simultaneously.
3. Counter before the attack may be fully launched - a pre-emptive strike. (Move last but hit first.)

In all things, be in the moment and adapt on the fly. Use timing, reflexes, and tactics. Remember to use slips, bob and weave, jamming, stop hits, and trapping hands. Always focus on compact technique, correct form, and proper breathing.

"You must apply the most effective weapon as soon as possible to the most vulnerable point of your enemy." - Bruce Lee

In-fighting drill for boxing and martial arts

The purpose is to drill sensitivity as well as quick reactions and counter attacks in close quarters. At first, use only punches to the body. Light to medium contact, at about half speed. With progress, the contact, speed, and strikes used may be varied as needed. Always use the appropriate training gear when practicing in-fighting with a partner.

Start in the on-guard position in front of your partner, outside of punching range. Engage as you normally would in a light spar, but with the goal of moving into close range. Move evasively on the feet such that you never "square up" with your partner. Of course this takes a lot of practice in terms of timing, distance, and counter attack. Remember your basics.

Practice slipping your partner's punches to the body by twisting at the torso while blocking with the elbows. Counter punches from a slip should be used with a broken rhythm. If you both have the same foot in front, your lead foot should be kept outside of his. Your shoulder as well as quick blocks should be used to jam his movements as you slip punches - especially when switch hitting (switching feet while pressing the advantage with punches).

Use jamming and clinching movements along with compact counter punches to off balance your partner. Once you have him off balance, keep him so by pulling him into more punches. This is called "dirty boxing" - remember that at first this should be drilled at medium speed / contact and some resistance. With more practice this drill should gradually start to resemble actual boxing style sparring.

Always press the advantage on the inside - using defensive offense. Overall, drill slipping, jamming, tricky and aggressive footwork, clinching, off balancing, and compact counter punches.

Boxing Combinations and Counts

All lead hand punches are odd numbered and all rear hand punches are even numbered. Just remember that all combos listed are basic ideas. Do what works for you! Just try to keep the punches flowing and try to put your combinations together smoothly. When working the bag using combinations, remember the following: Keep moving your head, keep up your defense, move in fast, move out fast, and work the jab as your main punch. Work the jab moving in and moving out. Throw many thousands of combinations to perfect what works for you, and to learn how to mix things up. Remember to incorporate feints and traps into your combinations, as you improve. For instance, bait their jab, slip and feint a 9 to draw their guard down for a block. Move in as you feint and launch a high combination.

Counts

1,2 - Jab, Cross

3,4 - Outside hooks to the head

5,6 - Uppercuts

7,8 - Outside hooks to the body

9,10 - Straight punches to the body

11,12 - Shovel hooks to the head

13,14 - Shovel hooks to the body

Combos

1,2,3 – Jab, Cross, Outside Hook

1,1,1,2

1,2,7,3

1,6,3 - the uppercut sets up for the hook but landing it is good too!

Parry a 1,2, and immediately counter with 1,2

Block, 2,3,2 (when defending your lead side)

Slip, 1,2,1 – fast; follow with body blows – hard!

Slip and quick step in with 9,10,1,2, follow with in-fighting

Slip – while slipping, quick step into close range, and 13,14,11,12

Slip, duck, step, 7,6

Duck, step, 9,10,5,12

Step in with jab feint, then hook with same hand

Block a hook to the body, counter with shovel hook on the same side - if you block your left side, use a left shovel hook, etc

Step in while blocking with the lead hand (to jam), brawling hook with rear hand, bob and weave in the direction of your hook, stand up with a high shovel hook with lead hand

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Traditions in martial arts, and levels of skill

As a dedicated karate-ka, I am all for traditions. We are expected to respect tradition in the martial ways, and rightfully so. It is indeed a privilege to be accepted into the instruction of a traditional school. The etiquette we learn in the martial ways may seem odd to Westerners, but following the etiquette develops humility and discipline. The principles, traditions, courtesies and so forth passed on in a “ryu” have stood the test of time. I recommend some solid reading on etiquette and stages of learning in the martial ways below -

Traditions: Essays on the Japanese Martial Arts and Ways:

<http://books.google.com/books/about/Traditions.html?id=8AUOrvJCuQAC>

Neko no Myojutsu – Mysterious Technique of the Cat:

<http://dazel.wordpress.com/2010/05/04/story-neko-no-myojutsu-mysterious-technique-of-the-cat/>

Teaching and Shu Ha Ri:

http://www.shinyokai.com/Essays_TeachingShuHaRi.htm

Shin Gi Tai – mind, technique, body

The concept of Shin Gi Tai – mind, technique, body – disciplining the mind by training the body. This is definitely something I've been learning more about recently. There is a book on the subject of "shin gi tai" that I've been meaning to read, by Michael Clarke, who also wrote a book on "hojo undo", supplementary training often used in older Okinawan fighting methods. I am still not an expert on the Okinawan styles, to be perfectly honest, and my primary experience has been in some of the Japanese styles of karate. However, I'm definitely fascinated with the types of "hojo undo" and breathing methods used in styles such as Goju ryu Karate. Below is a link to an article about "shin gi tai", by Michael Clarke -

<http://ymaa.com/articles/shin-gi-tai-karate-training-for-body-mind-and-spirit>

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The philosophy of Budo

I personally disagree with the current competitive aspects of modern martial arts, as a rule. Instead of competing, I prefer completing. What things can I do for myself that will make me a better person? What things can I do for another person that will make them better as a human being? The philosophy of Budo, and for that matter, Karate, has generally been – as a rule – that of perfecting one's character through discipline and mindfulness towards others. Below is a great article I found on such a topic -

<http://www.kawanabekaratedo.com/pages/philosophy/index.html>

Idealism in Martial Arts

Self defense is a necessary and integral part of martial arts. Still, it is also an unfortunate fact that self defense skills are still needed. In a world that is supposedly civilized, you would think that violence is a thing of the past. There is no getting rid of human nature, however. We can still discipline ourselves, of course, and daily try to be better people.

Also, self defense is a necessary evil. Still, I train in martial arts so as to prevent violence and to temper my own human nature. And perhaps I'm overly idealistic, but I'd like to continue trying to help others do the same and working towards changing the culture one life at a time.

Power and Technique in Martial Arts

Some martial arts instructors claim that strength is overrated and that it should not be relied upon. It is true there has to be a premium placed on technique. There is just no replacement for becoming as efficient as possible at mechanically effective movements.

Still, the CNS and muscular system drive the body. The stronger you make the muscles needed for your chosen athletic activity, and the better you train your explosiveness, the faster you become and the more powerful your techniques can be. Of course, you have to bridge the gap between strength training and pure technique by learning how to improve your strength in your martial art, so here again I agree that a premium has to be placed on technique. (Such as stance work and partner blocking drills seen in karate styles, which take leg and forearm strength, respectively.) Simply being stronger doesn't mean automatic success in the martial arts, and I would never argue that – technique and strength, along with other qualities, are needed. Specificity is king in any athletic endeavor, and this means specific technique training to get the most out of your muscles!

A strong grip is even useful in Aikido. Also, look at all the grip training and explosive training that Judo players engage in. Technique is utmost, yes. But let's remember that technique relies on the training methods and qualities that make it work. This includes the drills, footwork, momentum, body mechanics, power, looseness (being tensed only in the needed muscles), etc.

I will draw something of a comparison. If you look at sprinters, they have very powerful legs. Sprinting up hills, by itself, is an incredible way to build power in the legs. Yet, sprinters often have to go through a strength training regimen to build up the musculature needed to form a foundation for the explosive work. Of course, there's obviously a lot of technique behind sprinting as well. If you look at great sprinters in action, you'll notice how relaxed their upper body looks. No wasted energy.

In the martial arts, karate / TKD / similar striking styles especially, explosiveness in the legs is needed. If you look at the reverse punch, one of the staple moves of karate, you find that it is necessarily driven firstly by the legs and hips, while you do not carry unnecessary tension in the upper body. This is necessary for both efficiency of technique, meaning optimal use of power, and to avoid telegraphing.

Still, a reverse punch – properly set up, timed, and performed – can be almost thought of as a sprint-like lunge, but focused into the whipping action of the hip that gives momentum to the shoulder, which travels through to the fist – think of the fist as being a lead pipe on the end of a chain. You have to have the power to generate the momentum, yet also the technique

Power and Technique in Martial Arts continued

to land it accurately!

Any power in a striking technique starts with the lower body – and it does start in the technique. No amount of muscle or strength replaces proper technique. That being said, no amount of technique replaces the need for some strength. There's no debating the fact, though, that in Aikido, strength is very much deemphasized in favor of the principle of "irimi".

Irimi means blending – and in application, using your opponent's strength against them! That's so foundational to the art, it's a wonder more people don't grasp it. My Aikido instructor always said not to battle strength against strength or wrestle with your partner. Let him go where he wants to go and direct him that way. It made me think a lot about redirection as it is used in other styles.

It does all go back to the "yielding" or softer aspects of these arts. Even with joint locks, though, there's a minimum amount of hip torque needed to make the techniques work. But none of the throws in Aikido emphasize leg strength the way that Judo does. I found that Aikido was more mechanically efficient than Judo for certain throws, actually. That's not even a slight against Judo at all – I studied it under an instructor as well and love throw wheel, uchimata, and other such throws that are quite efficient and can be set up rather quickly. And the advanced combinations and counters in Judo – which honestly I never became advanced enough to learn – are amazing.

Recommendations for martial arts school owners

I highly recommend all martial arts instructors obtain other certifications that are well known and reputable. This shows he or she is serious about being a better instructor and engaging in continuing education. Another sign of good business is safety equipment being available (fire extinguishers, first aid kits, etc.). Also, a lot of the better martial arts studios normally have at least one or two of the instructors trained in CPR, AED, and first aid.

Sometimes money is indeed tight, and the instructor can't afford to enroll in other certification courses, but he or she should at least make sure his or her studio is safe! Usually, though, having other certifications related to the core curriculum of the school will give the instructor other possibilities for classes. Additional streams of revenue help ease the burden of expenses on the core curriculum, and therefore the tuition won't have to be too high.

Even in a tournament oriented school, it's still important for the instructors to maintain a safe, disciplined, respectful atmosphere. This isn't just a recommendation – it's essential! I believe that tournament oriented schools especially can learn from the physical conditioning and organization of sports teams.

That's not to say I'm casting any doubt on the effectiveness of the age old methods of the martial arts traditions throughout Asia, and they commonly have similarities to today's training methods. For instance, compare Okinawan karate equipment to modern barbells and wrist rollers. Modern sports science validates these methods! In many martial arts traditions, the training already includes warmups, progressive overload to force muscular adaptations, thousands of repetitions of an exercise to build skill and rehab connective tissues, flexibility / mobility work, etc. Yet, modern sports science can also contribute quite a lot to the training in traditional arts. Modern therapeutic modalities, training periodization, understanding body mechanics and anatomy, and so forth can add a lot to the value of a traditional martial arts conditioning program.

Also, I should clarify my thoughts on certifications. It's great for instructors to get further certifications in other martial arts, and/or attend various training camps as well as bring in guest instructors. However, it's also important to branch out into other disciplines such as gymnastics, Pilates, progressive calisthenics, what have you. Understanding how these can be integrated into an existing martial arts program, or compliment your program, is so beneficial to students that it shouldn't be passed up. Besides, it gives instructors an opportunity to learn, understand, and apply knowledge from modern sports sciences to their existing physical training curriculum.

Recommendations for martial arts school owners continued

I'm not saying that taichi instructors should suddenly start incorporating weight training into their courses. Complimentary disciplines work best, such as yoga, calisthenics, and so forth. Body weight training of any sort is so integral to success in any martial art, it's invaluable to learn an art of body weight training. The mental and health benefits of both martial arts and body weight arts are so numerous that it's a surprise that more people don't do more of both!

A great body weight training certification to add to your repertoire is the Progressive Calisthenics Instructor Certification. The official blog for the certification has articles that I recommend looking through for ideas on exercises and routines to add to your existing fitness program.

<http://pccblogger.dragondoor.com/>

One of my favorite articles is "Turning up the Mind-Muscle Connection". The mind and body are so connected that they are very nearly the same. Strength is a skill and a habit! Probably my favorite point from the article -

"One of the biggest lessons about the mind-muscle connection was that there's nothing in there about supplements, gadgets or fitness dogma. The root cause of all things muscle comes from the brain, not a product you can buy in a store."

<http://pccblogger.dragondoor.com/turning-up-mind-muscle-connection/>

I have already written about the progressive calisthenics certification below -

<http://owenjohnstonkarate.com/2013/12/11/progressive-calisthenics-certification-workshop/>

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Martial Arts – Cooperative Spirit

The martial arts in general claim to be about developing your character and not just the body. How can any martial artist claim that their training makes them a better person when they train to beat other people? Winning and losing under the rules of a sport are ego centered pursuits and have nothing to do with the martial spirit or the way of Budo. Think first of destroying the ego and cooperating with training partners. Sport can be a recreational activity that does not involve competition or the hostility that comes along with such. Everyone can win and improve in cooperative play.

<http://www.sportanddev.org/?5342/Competition-in-sport-Causing-conflict-or-promoting-peace-building>

<http://cooperativesports.org/>

<http://www.alfiekohn.org/parenting/tcac.htm>

Back to basics

I find myself coming back to basics. I remember learning early on about lowering my center of gravity into a horse stance in karate. Breathing deeply, then exhaling from the abdomen – deep down. Lowering everything, deepening, relaxing, forcing my focus down into the earth and making a connection to the ground. Doing that for so many hours over the course of the time I was in training under my sensei...The pain and the agony! The sweating and the mental exhaustion. Of course, also balanced out with the many other techniques piled on top, and the sparring drills, and such.

The basics were and are simple. But simple is HARD! Yet, pushing forward in life is like pushing forward in training. Keep it simple. But simple is honest, and it's hard. But it's always training, and training has a way of teaching you. Listen to your body, and listen to your emotions. They have ways of telling you when you're doing something wrong or too hard. This understanding can be applied to everything.

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Training Roundhouse Kick

From my experience in training, studying, and teaching, an optimal mawashi geri (roundhouse kick) fully utilizes hip torque by springing the full kinetic chain involved into motion, therefore generating momentum along the axis of rotation. (In this case, the body's vertical centerline.) This torque whips all the way through to the instep, shin, or ball of the foot, which is unloaded from the kicking leg at the optimal time. The tension provides potential energy in a way similar to that of the windup for a baseball pitch. Study up on the phrase "amortization phase".

The hip flexors are heavily used in kicking, and create a great degree of torque. The hip twist itself in mawashi geri is the key component, with the rest of the kinetic chain involved in the kick having to synergize with this motion, and the involved muscles of the leg (quadriceps complex, anterior tibialis etc).

Biomechanics of kicking – chapter 37 in Exercise and Sport Science:

<http://goo.gl/6XtuSz>

A common trouble with developing a powerful hip activation for mawashi geri using the lead leg is the tendency to lean backwards too far, too easily. This is because the front leg often carries a lot of weight. Most karate stylists carry a bit of a forward fighting stance (60 to 70% of body weight on the front leg). For kicking, I usually recommend a kickboxing stance.

Also, what I have found to help is to train 5 separate things:

Kinetic chain training. Stand in mawashi geri chamber beside a mounted makiwara at a height which you can kick. Slowly "uncork" the kick, tag it with the instep (not too hard, though, that is not the point right now) and slowly reload it. Do not put your leg down! Keep the leg up, in chamber, very slowly kick, tag, very slowly rechamber, repeat, until you're cramping up, then do the same for the other leg. Even more important is paying attention to every little part of each kick, even where your hands are and how your body is instinctively stabilizing.

Mobility work, and especially, L-sit training. You can use pushup handles or chairs instead of parallel bars / parallettes if you do not have those available to you. You can do them on your hands once you're comfortable enough with them.

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Training Roundhouse Kick continued

L-Sit Progressions - <http://goo.gl/5he3Y4>

Hanging leg raises - <http://goo.gl/41EoOE>

Multi level kicks with the lead leg, using different setups, to striking pads, once you have drilled the kinetic chain deeply a few times.

Lunges – look into how wrestlers, American style football players, and sprinters do them.

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Mikiri Applications in Karate

If you're not familiar with the concept of mikiri, the basic idea is that it is a "way of dealing with an attack other than blocking it" (Dave Lowry's definition in quotes). The word literally means "cutting with the body". Dave Lowry wrote a very good article about "mikiri" in which he gives a very concise yet useful analysis of the concept and how to drill it. As he states, though, it does take a lot of practice. I know that, for myself, it took me a very long time to become a good judge of range "on the fly" in sparring - especially when dealing with partners who have great economy of motion and do not telegraph (or very little)! Indeed, timing and distance are primary concepts in any martial art. Japanese styles, from my experience, term the concept that deals with range - "ma-ai". Working on sparring drills - such as one steps and kata "bunkai" - with my students has helped us all work on of distance management, especially "mikiri".

Short url to the mikiri article by Dave Lowry: <http://goo.gl/3nCU55>

This article is part of the author's book "The Karate Way: Discovering the Spirit of Practice", which is available on Amazon:

<http://goo.gl/3N7Rc9>

View the below syllabus for excellent descriptions of Mikiri and De-ai applications, as well as some useful drills:

<http://goo.gl/jk4mZL>

Dirty Boxing

In martial arts, timing, misdirection, feints and so forth are indeed very important. Below is a video that details dirty boxing. The check hook that is mentioned in the below video has been successfully used by many boxers, such as Floyd Mayweather Jr. The video demonstrates how to set up for it and other methods. Notice how the subtle body twisting and evasion up close sets up for the misdirection, intercepting your opponent's intentions, and counter punches. This all makes for great ways to drill in-fighting. The guy shows how to set up for an overhand right, and later, a shoulder push that sets up for a hook - it reminded me of the ways I teach my students to set up for and utilize "blind spots" when practicing their dirty boxing. Of course, it takes a lot of practice and awareness of subtle body movements, and being loose in sparring drills.

<http://goo.gl/D2x2Xu>

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All about Hojo Undo -
Supplementary training exercises for karate

"Hojo Undo", or "supplementary exercises", is a Japanese term that refers to training methods commonly used in traditional Okinawan karate. The exercises were designed to be very specific to karate training and helped develop breathing, posture, coordination, functional ambidextrous strength, and conditioning. The tools have traditionally been simple and improvised with some creativity and materials that are affordable or readily found for free - mostly wood, rope, straw, and stone.

The tools include, but are not limited to:

"Chi ishi" - weighted levers; aka "strength stones"

"Makiage kigu" - wrist rollers, normally a weight hung from a wooden handle via rope, and used to develop the wrists and forearms.

"Makiwara" - Padded striking post. Traditionally, rope is used to bind a pad of rice straw to the top to create a striking surface. (Maki = roll; Wara = straw.) Other materials such as duct tape are suitable, however. Other traditional types of makiwara include age-makiwara (hanging), ude-makiwara (round on all sides), tou-makiwara (bamboo stalks or cane). The smaller and more commonly seen makiwara boards are usually made of a pad that is covered with canvas and fixed to a board, then mounted to a wall. There are some variations, such as clapper and portable makiwara.

For a longer list of the tools, visit the Hojo Undo entry on Wikipedia -
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hojo_undo

Below are related writeups:

Makiwara board training for karate – earlier in the book

Shin Gi Tai – earlier in the book

All of my other writeups about Hojo Undo may be found by visiting my classes page and clicking the link titled “Hojo Undo” at the top -

<http://johnstonkarateclasses.com>

Or visiting this short URL - <http://goo.gl/GwTbps>

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Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge 'Karate-do: My Way of Life' by Gichin Funakoshi, 'The Karate Dojo' by Peter Urban', 'Bible of Karate - Bubishi' translated with commentary by Patrick McCarthy, and 'The Complete Idiot's Guide to Karate' by Randall G. Hassell and Edmond Otis as 3 of the major sources I used for this book. I also sourced the following pages in my research:

The official Wado-Ryu Japan site

www.wado-ryu.jp

The Japan Karate Institute homepage

www.japankarate.net

More details on Ohtsuka's life and the expansion of Karate.

Tomari-te

<http://www.msishinryu.com/history/tomari-te/>

Detailed explanation of Tomari's role in karate's development.

My other sources include:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karate_kata

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karate>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boxing>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazilian_jiu_jitsu

'The man who would be a warrior considers it his most basic intention to keep death always in mind, day and night, from the time he first picks up his chopsticks in celebrating his morning meal on New Year's Day to the evening of the last day of the year. When one constantly keeps death in mind, both loyalty and filial piety are realized, myriad evils and disasters are avoided, one is without illness and mishap, and lives out a long life. In addition, even his character is improved. Such are the many benefits of this act.' - Daidoji Yuzan, Budoshoshinshu: The Warrior's Primer (William Scott Wilson translation)

'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' - Philippians 1:21

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About the Author

I am a native of Lake City, SC and teach karate as a way of life. I serve Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I have been actively training in the martial arts since June 10th, 2002, when I enrolled at the Nippon Kokusai Karate Center (NKKC) location in Lake City, SC. I took over management of this location in January 2004, and obtained the rank of shodan (first degree black belt) in October of that year. NKKC is affiliated with Japan International Karate Center (JIKC). JIKC was founded by the late Hirano Kiyohisa-soke.

In late April 2005, I split from NKKC and founded Johnston Karate. Since then, I have had the opportunity to train in various other styles. Besides having continued teaching my own formulation of karate over the years, I have trained at various other JIKC dojo over the years as time allows. I trained once or twice a week at a boxing gym in Sumter, SC, for about 3 years. I also trained once a week for a year and a half in Brazilian JiuJitsu, in Conway, SC.

For free books and videos, plus the latest news, please view the Johnston Karate home page - <http://www.johnstonkarate.com>

To learn more about my qualifications, or contact me for a free consultation, visit my personal profile page - <http://owenjohnstonkarate.com>

Visit this book's home page and click the link on the top menu that says 'Supplementary Resources', for a list of resources that I highly recommend.

<http://understandingkarate.com>

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<http://tiny.cc/karatezip>

Thank you so much for reading the book! I hope you enjoyed it and that you gained some benefit from it. Please let me know what you think by getting in touch with me -

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Understanding Karate-Do: A Guide to Unity of Body, Mind, and Soul

Owen Johnston

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